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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Grounded freighter: Alaskan state regulators have banned commercial fishing in the Bering Sea near the wreckage of a grounded freighter where fuel oil has been seeping since early this month.

The order affects the Makushin Bay and Skan Bay tanner crab fishery, which had been scheduled to open Jan. 15. Also closed will be Pacific cod, black rockfish and fisheries for other groundfish that would have opened Saturday.

The wreckage of the 738-foot Selendang Ayu has been leaking oil and diesel fuel since it wrecked Dec. 8. More than 210,000 gallons is believed to have leaked so far.

So far, more than 40,000 pounds of oily waste have been collected in bags along the shore of Unalaska Island, according to officials. Forty-one dead birds and a dead sea otter have been recovered so far. Hundreds of other oil-blackened birds have been spotted.

Ohio election results: The Ohio secretary of state, who declared Presidential Bush the official winner in Ohio, is seeking a court order to keep himself from being interviewed as part of a court challenge of the Nov. 2 vote.

Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell claims his deposition is not required, and accused 37 voters challenging the election of "trivial conduct."

The court challenge cites irregularities including long lines, a shortage of voting machines in minority precincts and problems with computer equipment.

Bush defeated Sen. John Kerry by 119,000 votes, according to Blackwell's official count; Ohio's 20 electoral votes gave Bush the 270 he needed for victory.

War on terrorism

Guantanamo tribunals: A prisoner who allegedly stockpiled explosives at a police station in Afghanistan was one of three detainees to go before U.S. military review tribunals on Monday in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, an official said.

The military alleged the suspect, 34, was in charge of the police station where a raid by U.S. and Afghan forces netted two truckloads of ammunition and explosives, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daryl Borgquist, a Pentagon spokesman.

The ammunition was under the control of the ousted Taliban regime and was being used in operations against U.S. and coalition forces, Borgquist said.



Kashmir on the agenda: Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar, right, receives his Indian counterpart Shyam Saran at the Foreign Ministry on Monday in Islamabad, Pakistan. The foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan began two days of talks that will include their first formal dialogue on Kashmir since the nuclear rivals launched a peace process a year ago, officials said.

The Combatant Status Review Tribunals are intended to decide whether the approximately 550 prisoners from more than 40 countries at Guantanamo are properly held as "enemy combatants" or should be released.

World

Palestinian elections: Palestinian voters will be stamped with indecipherable ink and ballot boxes loaded with numbered seals to prevent possible fraud in the Jan. 9 presidential election, the first in nine years, election officials said Tuesday.

Preliminary results from about 3,000 polling stations will be available two or three hours after the polls close, according to a top official in the Central Election Commission. Two pollsters will conduct exit polls.

In a speech to about 4,000 backers in Jericho on Tuesday, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said he will follow in the footsteps of the late Yasser Arafat, whose position as head of the Palestinian Authority he is favored to win in a Jan. 9 election.

He said Arafat "devoted his life to the cause of his people," and pledged to follow Arafat's policies.

Stalled Korean talks: North Korea blamed South Korea on Tuesday for a stall in the dialogue between the two countries and demanded an apology.

In a lengthy report, the North's Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland cited a mass defection of North Koreans to the capitalist South earlier this year — and a joint military exercise the South held with the United States — as "anti-reunification acts."

Business

Fannie Mae shake-up: Franklin Raines, who was forced out as Fannie Mae's chief executive after five years, is due to receive a pension of \$1.3 million a year for life, according to an agreement with the mortgage lending giant.

In documents filed Monday with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Fannie Mae also revealed that Raines has deferred compensation of \$8.7 million to be paid out through 2020 and owns more than \$5.5 million in the company's stock.

Stories and photo from wire reports

Zama ITT



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U.S. military beginning tsunami relief efforts

Some Pac forces now in Thailand, others await orders

BY VINCE LITTLE

Stars and Stripes

U.S. military officials in the Pacific are cranking up humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief missions to Southeast Asia after a powerful earthquake triggered a catastrophic tsunami along the coastlines of Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and other nations Sunday.

Lt. Col. Bill Bigelow, a Pacific Command spokesman, said military resources in Japan, Guam and elsewhere in the region will be tapped in the relief effort. Air Force and Navy officials in Japan dispatched aircraft and ships to the area on Tuesday, with personnel moving into forward-operating locations that will be used as staging platforms for the delivery of supplies such as temporary shelter, clothing, food and water.

Marine officials on Okinawa were unsure whether they'd launch a humanitarian-assistance mission to Thailand, similar to the one recently conducted in the Philippines. Kadena Air Base had tankers and medical-evacuation teams standing by, but Air Force officials there had not received a specific tasking Tuesday.

"We're just getting stuff on the ground," Bigelow said. "We continue to plan for the relief effort." At least 52,000 people in 11 countries were killed in the weekend devastation. The 9.0-magnitude earthquake beneath the Indian Ocean off Indonesia was the most powerful to strike the planet in four decades.

PACOM officials sent three P-3 Orion aircraft to Utopia, Thailand, on Tuesday to conduct search-and-rescue surveillance, while the Navy has deployed three others from Kadena to assist in

that endeavor.

"The P-3 Orion aircraft's long range and long loiter time capability is an invaluable asset for search-and-rescue operations as it can view the battle space and rapidly provide that information to regional Rescue Coordination Centers," said Lt. Arven Consul, a Commander, Naval Forces Marianas spokeswoman on Guam. "While not able to physically rescue a survivor from the water, the P-3's communications suite and abilities to stay on station, survey for long periods of time and deploy life rafts in the vicinity of any survivors make it an important component of any search-and-rescue operation."

C-130 cargo planes left Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Tuesday to deliver equipment and supplies to Utopia, where crews are setting up a larger presence at the site forward-operating base. Once the

Group's Detachment 1 at Yokota. But Tuesday, he was part of a C-130 crew preparing to deliver a mobile command post to Thailand.

"When we get down there, we'll have all our communications capabilities set up. That includes air-to-ground radios and satellite communications," O'Daniel said. "We'll be the focal point for all cargo coming in and going out of the airfield. We'll be the command-and-control portion. We'll talk to the airplanes and find out what they have coming in."

Officials are discussing the possibility of establishing another forward-operating base in Sri Lanka to assist in the relief efforts, he added.

The response time for Tuesday's mission was far shorter than usual, O'Daniel indicated. He said his team normally gets a 12-hour window, but this week, prep time was cut to nine.

"It's significant going out and doing relief missions," he said.

"Performing humanitarian relief is so much different than going out for a routine exercise or flight. You get a better sense of pride knowing you're helping other people. I've

great joy, a rewarding job. I love doing this."

Plans for handling donations from individuals have not been arranged, Comer said.

"We're just taking care of the U.S. government-provided support right now," he said. "I understand people really want to help out. If they want to assist, the best thing for them to do is contact the local Red Cross or some sort of support agency. The Air Force doesn't have a lot of that set up right now to get regular people involved."

Seventh Fleet units also are assisting in the relief efforts. Ships of the USS Abraham Lincoln Carri-



VINCE LITTLE/Stars and Stripes

Personnel from Yokota's 36th Airlift Squadron load a mobile command post into a C-130 on Tuesday afternoon. The plane was bound for Utopia, Thailand, where crews will use a forward-operating base as a staging area for relief supplies being sent to tsunami- and earthquake-ravaged areas of Southeast Asia.

er Strike Group, along with those from Expeditionary Strike Group 5, have been diverted to the affected areas to conduct humanitarian relief operations.

Seventh Fleet officials said they're prepared to offer a variety of assets, including ships, aircraft and personnel.

The USS Bonhomme Richard, an amphibious-assault ship assigned to San Diego but on a six-month deployment in support of the war on terror, has shortened its stay on Guam while the USS Duluth and USS Rushmore are bypassing the island completely to join the Southeast Asia effort.

The three Expeditionary Strike Group 5 ships are well-equipped for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, officials say. Each has extensive medical facilities on board, as well as capacity to trans-

port supplies. They had been expected to stay on Guam until Sunday.

PACOM also is sending three assessment teams of about a dozen mostly military personnel to determine what further aid the military could supply.

"Those teams assess how best and where best our assets can be utilized," Bigelow said.

Pacific units have the capabilities to provide engineering, transportation assistance, medical aid and water. The Defense Department also is looking at working with other government and non-governmental agencies, and other nations in the region, on cooperative relief efforts.

Fred Zimmermann, Juliana Gitter and Greg Tyler contributed to this report.

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"Performing humanitarian relief is so much different than going out for a routine exercise or flight. You get a better sense of pride knowing you're helping other people."

Tech. Sgt. Paul O'Daniel

Mission support team chief, Yokota Air Base, Japan

mission-support package is in place, aircraft will conduct more targeted disaster-relief operations in the region, said 1st Lt. Warren Comer, a 374th Airlift Wing spokesman.

"We're going to set it up so we can operate C-130s out of there and provide humanitarian relief," he added. "We're turning it into a larger forward-operations base so we can operate more units out of there."

Additional military supplies were being picked up at Kadena, Comer said.

Tech. Sgt. Paul O'Daniel is a mission support team chief for the Tanker Airlift Control Element of the 613th Contingency Response

plies of shelter, food and water bags are on their way to Indonesia from Dubai, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The United States has given more aid in the last four years than any other nation or combination of nations in the world," Powell, when asked about the comments Monday by Jan Egeland, the U.N. humanitarian chief.

Other aid agencies were struggling to organize what may be the world's largest and most complex relief effort — responding to a swathe of death and destruction across 11 countries that the United Nations described as unprecedented.

Egeland, who is in charge of emergency

relief coordination, said the disaster had caused "many billions of dollars" of damage, and could be the costliest in history.

Relief organizations used to dealing with one or two crises in the world at a time now have 11 disaster zones, tens of thousands of unburied bodies, millions of people left homeless and the risk of mass outbreaks of disease.

"This is unprecedented," said Yvette Stevens, an emergency relief coordinator of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Almost all of the nations hit were poor and developing, and will be largely reliant on outside help to cope.

Some nations will be expected to take on

more of the burden of relief efforts, said the United Nations, which is coordinating with organizations including the International Red Cross.

"A country like India has a lot of capacity to cope," Stevens said. "In Malaysia, there has been some [impact] but the government can cope."

Meanwhile, relief supplies were starting to trickle into the region's devastated nations.

The Red Cross in Nairobi, Kenya, which has launched an appeal for \$6.6 million — said in a statement that a plane carrying 105 tons of blankets, medicines and tarp for 50,000 people was headed Tuesday to Sri Lanka.

U.S. development agency donates additional \$20M

The Associated Press

The U.S. Agency for International Development prepared Tuesday to add \$20 million to an initial \$15 million contribution for Asian earthquake relief as Secretary of State Colin Powell bristled at a United Nations official's suggestion that the United States has been "stingy."

A senior U.S. official told The Associated Press the increased aid figure was bound to be pushed even higher as assessments of the damage from the biggest earthquake in 40 years are received.

The Pentagon is preparing a supplemental relief operation and pre-stocked sup-

Death toll from tsunami passes 52,000

Military still determining whereabouts of U.S. troops

By JENNIFER H. SVAN, FRED ZIMMERMAN AND FRANKLIN FISHER
Stars and Stripes

As nations hit by Sunday's earthquake-driven tsunami continued to tally the human toll, U.S. military commands across the Pacific worked to determine whether any servicemembers were among the dead or missing.

While all servicemembers and civilians from some commands had yet to be accounted for, initial reports indicated that most who'd been in the affected areas were safe.

In Japan, Misawa Air Base officials said Tuesday they had accounted for three Air Force members who were in Thailand on Sunday.

Two already have returned to Misawa and the other has been in contact with base officials and is safe, said Misawa spokesman Tech. Sgt. Mikal Canfield. He said he did not know where the three servicemembers were when the disaster struck. No Air Force personnel assigned to the base are missing, he said.

Officials at Yokota Air Base and Camp Zama in Japan said all personnel stationed there had been accounted for.

On Guam, Andersen Air Force Base officials said they had no personnel visiting areas affected by the tsunami.

All members have been contacted and accounted for," said Andersen spokesman Tech. Sgt. Bryan Gatewood.

Marine spokesmen said Tuesday some servicemembers assigned to Camp Butler, Okinawa, were in Thailand on leave when the tsunami hit but they had been accounted for and are safe.

The spokeswoman, citing force protection/security issues, said she couldn't divulge exact numbers of personnel in the region.

She added that information on Marines possibly vacationing in the affected areas, who are assigned to the III Marine Expeditionary Force and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, still was being researched Tuesday afternoon.

The U.S. military command in Seoul said Tuesday it was working to account for members of its military communities who might be in the affected areas.

A written statement attributed to Air Force Lt. Col. Deborah Bertrand, U.S. Forces Korea spokeswoman, read: "We have identified and are currently confirming the safety and whereabouts of those USFK members in the areas affected. That process is going slowly but well so far. Infrastructure damage has made communications difficult but we are hopeful that each of them will be accounted for soon."

The personnel in affected areas "isn't a large number, but even one unaccounted for is too many and we will rest until every member of our command is located and assisted in returning safely to us," Bertrand said.

Many southeast Asian countries, particularly Thailand, are popular vacation destinations for servicemembers and DOD civilians.

While a firm number wasn't readily available, a Department of Defense Dependents Support Pacific spokesman said Tuesday "quite a few" DOD's personnel were in the affected areas.

Tuesday afternoon, all but 15 of DOD's Pacific's 45 schools had replied to a query from the regional office. All schools that replied said their staff members were safe, DOD's officials said.

Officials from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, and Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, reported Monday that all personnel in the tsunami-stricken nations were accounted for and safe.

By LELY T. DUHARI

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Mourners in Sri Lanka buried their dead with bare hands while displaced and hungry islanders in Indonesia looted stores following explosive tsunamis that the United Nations said may be history's costliest natural disaster.

The death toll rose to more than 52,000 early Wednesday and officials expected it to rise further.

A dozen nations in a band of destruction from Southeast Asia to Africa tallied corpses at tropical beaches, devastated villages and choked hospital morgues — with 10,000 dead found in a single Indonesian town, according to one government agency.

Indonesia's Health Ministry said in a statement early Wednesday that 27,178 people have been killed on Sumatra island, which was closest to the earthquake's epicenter. But the ministry said this figure did not include deaths from districts on the island's hard-hit western coast, including the town of Meulaboh.

Purnomo Sidik, national disaster director at the Social Affairs Ministry, said late on Tuesday that emergency workers who reached Meulaboh reported 10,000 dead. There was no immediate explanation why the Health Ministry statement did not count the figure given by Sidik.

Thousands of people were missing, and millions remained homeless.

Aid agencies feared malaria and cholera may add to the toll from Sunday's massive quake-sparked waves, and mounted what U.N. officials said would be the world's biggest relief effort. "This is unprecedented," said Yvette Steinhilber, an emergency relief coordinator of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

But help wasn't arriving fast enough for Indonesia's Sumatra island, where residents turned to looting to find food.

"There is no help, it is each person for themselves here," district official Tengku M. Zulkarnain told a radio from the island's devastated western coast.

Sunday's 9.0-magnitude earthquake under the Indian Ocean shot concussions of water onto coastlines from Indonesia to Somalia, drowning thousands. Almost a third of the dead were children, the U.N. children's agency estimated.



Bodies are piled in a mass burial pit for unidentified bodies Tuesday near Gale, Sri Lanka. Officials in Gale, severely hit by the tsunami Sunday, mounted a loudspeaker on a fire engine to advise residents to lay bodies on roads for collection.

More than 4,000 were killed in India and more than 1,500 in Thailand.

National elections were postponed indefinitely in the Maldives, an Indian Ocean archipelago where 55 were killed.

In Sri Lanka's severely hit town of Gale, officials mounted a loudspeaker on a fire engine to advise residents to lay bodies on roads for collection. Elsewhere in Sri Lanka, residents took on burial efforts with forks or even bare hands to scrape a final resting place for victims.

The tsunami and flooding have uprooted land mines in the war-torn country, threatening to kill or maim aid workers and survivors attempting to return to what's left of their homes.

Indonesia's Sumatra island was nearest the epicenter of Sunday's monstrous quake — the world's biggest in 40 years — and rescuers there battled to reach isolated coasts and dig into rubble of destroyed houses to seek survivors and retrieve the dead.

Red Cross official Irmam Rachmat, in Banda Aceh, said people on the island were in despair.

"People are looting, but not because

they are evil, but they are hungry," he said. "We don't have enough people to bury the dead. We are worried that all the corpses on the streets will lead to disease."

In once-thriving resorts of southern Thailand, volunteers dragged scores of corpses — including many foreign tourists — from beaches, inland pools and the debris of once-riveting hotels. Near Phang Nga province's devastated Similan Beach and Spa Resort, where mostly German tourists were staying, a naked corpse hung suspended from a tree as if crucified.

The disaster could be history's costliest, with "many billions of dollars" of damage, said U.N. Undersecretary Jan Egeland, who is in charge of emergency relief coordination. Millions face a hazardous future because of polluted drinking water and a lack of health services, he said.

Scores of people also were killed in Malaysia, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The waves traveled as far as Somalia, with 100 dead, and Tanzania, with 10. A handful of deaths also were reported in Seychelles, Bangladesh and Kenya.

Brother: 'They just ran for their lives'

N.H. family visiting Thailand beach fortunate to survive surprise wave

The Associated Press

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — A Portsmouth family is lucky to be alive after their trip around the world landed them at the site of this week's devastating earthquake in the Andaman Sea.

Bill and Susan McClure have been traveling since July with their two daughters, Morgan and Lily, ages 12 and 8. They reached Thailand on Christmas, the day before a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck the Indian Ocean, killing more than 52,000 people.

At least 12 U.S. citizens died, Secretary of State Colin Powell said. Hundreds more remain missing in 10 countries in southern Asia and Africa.

Bill McClure's brother, Andrew McClure, said Susan and the girls were on the beach when the nature disaster hit.

"It sounds like they were in a very dangerous situation and got out of it," Andrew McClure said Monday night. They were on the beach and they ran. Then we

got word they didn't know where Bill was."

Bill McClure was believed to have been on a scuba diving trip at the time. At least 24 hours passed before his family heard that he was OK.

At 4 a.m. on Monday, Andrew McClure got a phone call at his Brentwood home from Susan.

"We were very fortunate that they were able to call us," he said. "They borrowed an international cell phone, so they only had a few minutes."

Susan McClure described what happened when the tsunami hit.

"You can only imagine what it must have been like to be a mother with 12- and 8-year-old girls clinging to you," said Andy McClure. "She said the water was ankle deep and then suddenly it was chest deep. They just ran for their lives. I've been in tough spots before, but never where my life, and my children's lives, were in imminent threat of death. You

just can't know what that kind of trauma does to you."

Communication has been limited during the family's travels, primarily because the McClures have spent most nights camping out, Andrew McClure said. When they reached Thailand, however, where accommodations were in short supply, they were able to stay in a hotel.

Since they started their travels, the McClures have been filing regular dispatches that have been published on the Sunday Herald travel page and on www.seacostonline.com.

When asked if he thought the family would continue their journey or return to Portsmouth, Andrew McClure wasn't sure.

"It all depends on the details of what happened," he said.

"This has the potential of being a very traumatizing thing. They have a lot of questions. They probably need time to feel safe before they can decide to go on."

Tsunami risk minimal for bases in Pacific

Geographical features provide natural buffer

By GREG TYLER

Stars and Stripes

U.S. Navy facilities in Japan and Guam are unlikely to experience tsunami disasters like those that hit countries in Southeast Asia on Sunday, officials said.

When earthquakes occur and tsunamis could result, the Navy weather detachments receive as much warning as possible from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, they said.

"Most of the time, when earthquake activity in the region leads to a tsunami it means a rise in the water levels by an inch, or a few inches," said Jon Nylander, spokesman for Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan.

"If the tsunami is extremely powerful and moves as fast as it did in Southeast Asia, then about the best we can do is hunker down and head for high ground," he said. "The aftereffects would then be addressed by the disaster preparedness plan at each base."

The good news, officials said, is that harbors at Yokosuka Naval Base and Sasebo Naval Base are protected by land between the open sea and the bases. U.S. Naval Base Guam is protected similarly with coral reefs and the Marianas Trench, both helping to deflect a tsunami's powerful punch.

"The most these facilities typically experience from tsunami activity, Nylander said, is a rise in sea

level anywhere from one to several inches.

According to the International Tsunami Information Center, the only damaging tsunami in Guam's recorded history was in 1849. Several bayside villages were flooded and a woman was washed out to sea and killed.

Three of the eight known tsunamis occurred in Japan, according to the National Geophysical Data Center's Web site. Those include a 1707 tsunami that killed an estimated 30,000 people, a tsunami in Sanriku in 1896 that killed approximately 27,000 and another in Sanriku that killed about 3,000 in 1933.

Preparing for deadly tsunamis, with their mind-boggling swells and stories-high waves like those that devastated areas throughout Asia a few days ago, is almost impossible. Petty Officer 1st Class Aaron Kawczak, a forecaster with the Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Detachment at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, said disastrous tsunamis develop quickly and can maintain speeds of up to 500 miles per hour for thousands of miles.

If given time to prepare, bases could issue warnings on radio and television and any other means available. And if deemed necessary and if time permits, the base could evacuate. "But that's never happened in base history," the weather forecaster said.

"When you drop a rock in a pool of water, you can see the rip-

ples moving out from the center. In essence, those ripples are tsunami; it works the same way," Kawczak explained.

"For us to see any serious tsunami action, a tsunami-generating earthquake would have to occur very close to the Sasebo Harbor," he added, "which I suppose is possible but hasn't happened."

Ships berthed at Japan and Guam bases probably would lack time to sortie were a massive tsunami en route, and the minor rise in sea level from lesser tsunamis is not particularly dangerous, he explained.

"Ships can be fairly safe at sea during a tsunami because the large waves are moving deep under the surface. Out at sea, they aren't extremely noticeable," Kawczak explained. The passing waves produce only a gentle rise and fall of the surface.

The Novosibirsk Tsunami Laboratory in Novosibirsk, Russia, recorded 796 tsunamis in the Pacific Ocean from 1900 to 2001, according to NASA's Global Change Master Directory Web site. Of those, 117 caused casualties and damage mostly near the source, and at least nine caused widespread destruction throughout the Pacific.

The greatest number of tsunamis during any one year was 19 in 1938, the GCMC site states, but all were minor and caused no damage. No single year during the 101-year period was free of tsunamis.

Of the total tsunamis, the



KYODO/AP

The USS Kitty Hawk, shown in 2001 anchored at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, is not at great risk of tsunami damage because land separates the base from the open sea. The same is the case at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, and U.S. Naval Base Guam.

GCMC tally shows 17 percent generated in or near Japan. The distribution of tsunamis in other areas is as follows: South America, 15 percent; New Guinea-Solomon Islands, 13 percent; Indonesia, 11 percent; Kuril Islands and Kamchatka, 10 percent; Mexico and Central America, 10 percent; Philippines, 9 percent; New Zealand and Tonga, 7 percent; Alaska and the west coasts of Canada and the United States, 7 percent; and Hawaii, 3 percent.

Prior to Sunday's disaster, the most deadly tsunami in recorded history followed the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano in 1883 in Indonesia. An estimated 36,000 people died from the eruption, the majority from tsunamis, according to the site.

Pacific Tsunami Warning Center bulletins, as well other tsunami information, are available at the center's Web site: <http://www.prl.noaa.gov/ptwc/>.

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Survivors struggle to carry on amid devastation

The Associated Press

EDITOR'S NOTE — The following are snapshots of how people coped Tuesday with the aftermath of a powerful earthquake and tsunami.

BANGKOK, Thailand — The Alliance Francaise is usually the place in Bangkok where people who enjoy French food and culture gather to watch movies or take classes.

In the last few days, it's become a kind of community center for French people to exchange news and donate food and clothes to help families caught up in the devastation of the tsunami that hit Thailand's southern beach resorts.

On Tuesday, 8-year-old Juliet David was being helped by a volunteer to try on little dresses. Other children showed up wearing nothing more than underwear. All their clothes had been lost.

One of Juliet's arms was bandaged, cradling in a sling. Her angelic face stared forlornly as she sorted through clothes on the table.

She grabbed a teddy bear in a pile of dolls and held it close to her chest while aimlessly wandering around a large room stocked with food, clothes and toys.

Juliet was on the beach with her father and sister when the tsunami hit. She was found after sleeping alone for two days in the woods.

Her father died, but Juliet's sister survived and somehow they were reunited. They were brought to Bangkok and taken into the care of the French Embassy and Alliance Francaise until they can be reunited with their mother back home.

Medics and coroners work side by side

NAGAPATTINAM, India — When an ambulance siren approaches, two groups of doctors at the hospital get ready: one to treat the injured, the other to receive bodies. Usually, the second group gets the work.



A Sri Lankan fisherman stands next to fishing vessels that were pulled ashore by Sunday's powerful tsunami in the coastal town of Berwella in southern Sri Lanka, on Tuesday.

Across a wide swathe of India's southern coast, hospitals have been reduced to counters for registering the dead.

"There were so many dead and very few injured," the Rev. P. Xavier, rector of the Basilica of the Virgin Mary, said Tuesday. He estimated 1,400 people may have died in the nearby pilgrimage town of Velankanni.

Makeshift morgues hold dead

LHOKSEUMAWE, Indonesia — "Heave ho! Let's get this out of the way!" a team of men shouted as they lifted the frame of a destroyed house Tuesday. Women waited when they saw what lay underneath — the body of a young girl half-buried by wet, black sand.

At a makeshift morgue a short drive away, villagers holding towels against their faces made their way past rows of corpses, lifting plastic sheets to look for a familiar face. One of the bodies was tagged, with a name scrawled on one side of cigarette pack.

"My mother, no word. My sisters, brothers, aunt, uncle, grandmother, no word," yelled one woman. "Where are they? Where are they? I don't know where to start looking."

About 3,000 people are living in tents in Lhokseumawe, a battered town in Aceh province on the island of Sumatra.

Clothes in short supply

MUTTUKADU, India — When a man who gave his name as Prabhu and his friends showed up in a three-wheeled delivery motorcycle piled with used clothes Tuesday, they were mobbed by people left homeless by the tsunamis.

As the situation verged on chaos, local officials stepped in and shepherded Prabhu across the street, where his bags of clothing were put with food that was being rationed.

This small fishing village 20 miles south of Madras was pummeled Sunday.

More than 300 people are sheltering under three huge banyan trees. Most lost everything when waves swept over their thatch homes.

Women who salvaged their saris stretched them out to dry, giving the brown grassy expanses streaks of color.

"Mostly these people lost clothes ... We wanted to help," said Prabhu, a 26-year-old laborer who is going around with his friends to gather clothes from their neighbors.

Despite the mob scene, he said they would continue to gather clothes in the morning and hand them out in the afternoon.

"Human nature is to help people," he said.

802 killed in train swept away by tsunami

BY CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
The Associated Press

TELWATTA, Sri Lanka — More than 800 people were killed when their train, the "Queen of the Sea," was swept off the track by this week's raging tsunami, police said, and several hundred bodies pulled from the twisted wreckage were buried Tuesday alongside the railway line.

The train was carrying 1,000 residents of Colombo to a southern beach resort when it came to a stop just before its destination as waters began to rise Sunday. Residents of nearby towns ran to the train, trying to seek protection on its roof when the wall of water hit, police said.

The eight rust-colored train cars lay disconnected and overturned in deep pools of water yards away from the track amid debris and fallen palm trees Tuesday. The force of the waves had torn off some of the wheels, and the tracks twisted like a hoop on a roller coaster.

One thousand tickets were sold

in Colombo for the train, and rescuers recovered 802 bodies from the train's cars and the muck beneath them, said military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake.

No relatives claimed 204 of those bodies, so they were buried in a mass grave Tuesday, with Buddhist monks performing traditional funeral rites. They chanted and poured water on the grave to symbolize the giving of merits to the living to the dead.

Venerable Baddegama Samitha, a Buddhist monk and former parliamentarian who presided over the ritual, said he realized some of the dead were of other faiths — the region has a significant Muslim population and a moment's silence was held to honor them.

"This was the only thing we could do," he said. "It was a desperate solution. The bodies were rotting. We gave them a decent burial."

The destruction across Sri Lanka's coasts from Sunday's disaster was so heavy that authorities were not immediately aware

of the train's loss, said Sasanka Jayasekara, a lawyer and member of the local government.

The train — named "Samudradevi," meaning Queen of the Sea — had left Colombo at 7:30 a.m. and was traveling 70 miles southeast to Galle along the coastal rail line, which runs about 200 yards from the shore. It was near the village of Telwatta, about 15 miles from Galle, when the water began to rise.

"The people in the village ran toward the train and climbed on top of it," said Police Superintendent B.P.B. Ayupala. "Then the water level went down — the effect of the approaching tsunami sucking in the coastal waters before its strikes — and 10 minutes later, it came back" in the giant wave, he said.

The train's driver survived, though police under his authority had not spoken to him.

Ayupala said authorities took fingerprints of the unclaimed dead so they could be identified later if possible.

At a nearby police station, offic-



Buddhist monks and villagers search for the missing along railroad tracks at Telwatta, about 63 miles south of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

ers laid out identification and credit cards, drivers' licenses and bank books found at the train site.

The people in the cards included an electricity board secretary, an assistant lecturer at a state research institute of social development and a student from the Uni-

versity of Jaffna, in the north of the island nations.

"Police told us to come and have a look at this collection of ID cards," said Premasiri Jayasinghe, one of many searching for relatives believed to have been on the train.

Disaster taking heaviest toll on Asia's youngest generation

BY S. SRINIVASAN
The Associated Press

CUDDALORE, India — The buzz of grim conversation in the darkened morning was broken by a man's shriek as the small body was lowered on a bed. "My son, my king!" wailed Venkatesh, hugging the limp shrouded bundle.

Thousands of miles away in Indonesia, farmer Yusya Yusman aimlessly searched the beaches for his two children lost in Sunday's tsunami. "My life is over," he said emotionally.

In country after country, children have emerged as the biggest victims of Sunday's quake-born tsunami — thousands and thousands drowned, battered and washed away by huge walls of water that have wiped away huge numbers from an entire generation of Asians.

"The power of this earthquake, and its huge geographical reach, are just staggering," said UNICEF Executive Director

Thousands of children lost on beaches; many survivors now orphans

Carol Bellamy. Hundreds of thousands of children who managed to survive in the affected coastal communities now "may be in serious jeopardy," she added.

The U.N. organization estimates at least one-third of the tens of thousands who died were children, and the proportion could be up to half, said UNICEF spokesman Alfred Ironside in New York. He said communities are suffering a double loss: dead children and orphaned boys and girls. "Our major concern is that the kids who survived the tsunami now survive the aftermath. Because children are the most vulnerable to disease and lack of proper nutrition and water."

Children make up at least half of the population in Asia. Many of them work alongside poverty-stricken parents in the fishing or related industries in coastal areas, so

they were in harm's way when the tsunami came. Many children from the more affluent families also would have been on the beaches for a stroll or for Sunday picnics.

In Sri Lanka, which suffered the biggest loss of life, crowds had come to the beaches to watch the sea after word spread that it was producing larger-than-normal waves.

Thousands of children joined their elders to see the spectacle. The waves brought in fish. The old and the young collected them. Many waited for more fun.

Then the 15- to 20-foot waves hit the tropical island of 19 million people.

"They got caught and could not run to safety. This is the reason why we have so many child victims," said Renzie Perera, a police spokesman who said reports from affected police stations indicated children made up about half the victims in Sri Lanka.

On Monday, parents wept over the bodies of their children in streets and hospitals across the island, even as some dead children still dangled unclaimed from barbed wire fences.

The scenes of unimagined grief and mourning were repeated across Asia.

"Where are my children?" wept 41-year-old Ahsah, as she searched for her 11 missing children in Banda Aceh, the Indonesian city closest to Sunday's epicenter.

On the day disaster struck, Malaysian Rosita Wan, 30, recalled watching in horror as her 5-year-old son was gulped by the sea while he swam near the shore at Penang.

"I could only watch helplessly while I heard my son screaming for help. Then he was underwater and I never saw him again," said the sobbing mother.

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Martin leaving DODDS after three decades

BY DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

TORII STATION, Okinawa — For 35 years, Jeff Martin has been a fixture in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools system, from Germany to Spain, from Germany to Spain, from teaching health, business and physical education to holding high-level ad-

ministrative posts.

That ends Thursday when Martin leaves his post as chief of staff, the No. 2 position within DODDS-Pacific, to retire.

Leaving what he calls "probably the best job I've ever going to have" is going to be "extremely difficult," said Martin, 63, who first joined DODDS in 1969, teaching in Mannheim, Germa-

ny. Martin and his wife, Faith, will join their son, Brett, in Phoenix.

Of all Martin did as chief of staff, he says, his main passion was coordinating activities DODDS-Pacific offers its students outside the classroom.

That focus, he said, may have sprung from not being "a great scholar ... I was always involved

with activities and I can see that a lot of my successes were in activities, whether it was drama or sports."

That passion, said his boss of seven years, DODDS-Pacific director Dr. Nancy Bresell, became Martin's signature and most visible quality.

"He has really devoted a lot of time and energy" to activities and has helped to make them the important events that they are in the lives of our kids," Bresell said. "It's going to be hard to find somebody to step into those shoes and continue in the same vein. Kids are important to Jeff."

Originally from Milton, Mass., Martin graduated from Salem State University, near Boston, in 1969, and had been teaching in Connecticut when he and his new bride, Faith, decided to go to Europe to ski and seek a teaching job overseas.

"Either they would not pay you more than 12 cents an hour and you could ski all you wanted, or they'd pay you a lot of money and you couldn't ski," Martin said.

Then, "I found out about the DODDS office in Germany, and after the interview I was picked up as a local hire," he recalled.

"One year turned into 35-plus wonderful years," he said, adding that family and opportunities to see the world kept him in DODDS. "We couldn't find a better place to educate our children. And to be able to see the world as a family, the traveling, the skiing, the Olympics."

The first three years were spent teaching and serving as a drug counselor at Mannheim. Torjeon Middle School in Spain followed, then his first administrative stint, as health and physical education counselor and interscholastic sports czar for the DODDS' Mediterranean district.

"I really work well with kids having problems, be it socially, academically, athletically," Martin said. "I'm not sure why. I

guess I can just relate to them better."

The call came in 1987 from Dr. Jerry Bloom, his former boss in Spain and then DODDS-Pacific director. Bloom wanted Martin to take his first administrative post in the Far East: assistant principal of Kadena High School on Okinawa.

"It was extremely difficult to leave," Martin recalled. "We had 12½ wonderful years in Spain. It was hard on my children. It's hard to uproot, and it was a hard transition. However, in the long run, it turned out to be the best thing in the world."

After two years at Kadena High, Martin moved up to the DODDS-Pacific regional office in 1989, where he has remained in various capacities, including his current chief-of-staff post.

Working with the Pacific schools, particularly Kadena — from where his two sons, Brett and Matthew, graduated — and Kubasaki high schools on Okinawa, was the main benefit, he said.

"The Pacific high schools are tops in DODDS," Martin said.

"You can't find two better high schools than Kadena and Kubasaki. Top-notch faculty, curriculum and great activities. The enthusiasm of the faculty. It's the size, a little bigger than some of the other schools, so they can offer more than some of the smaller schools."

There will be plenty to miss, Martin said. "From kindergarten through the 12th grade, we have the best parents, teachers, students, administrators and community support," he said. "It really is a whole other networking commitment ... I'll miss it."

E-mail: Dave Ornauer at: ornauerd@stripes.osd.mil



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Okinawa activists file lawsuit to halt seabed drilling test

CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

NAHA, Okinawa — Okinawa residents, environmentalists and anti-military advocates used the Japanese government Monday, demanding it halt a seabed drilling test for a new U.S. Marine Corps air station off the shore of Henoko in Nagasaki.

Among those suing are 68 Okinawa residents from Henoko and elsewhere, including a fisherman from neighboring Kunigami.

In the lawsuit, they argue a new military airport would further burden Okinawans who already bear the burdens of a heavy U.S. military presence. The facility also would endanger various corals and the dugong, a type of manatee that feeds there, the lawsuit contends.

Corals has been already damaged by the platforms set up for the drilling survey, said Toshio Ikemiyagi, chief lawyer for those who filed the lawsuit. "If this continues, impacts on dugongs are unavoidable."

The lawsuit, filed at Naha District Court, seeks to suspend construction of the air station, which is to be built on reclaimed land next to Camp Schwab.

"The lawsuit was brought by plaintiffs who are resolved not to let any new military base be built on Okinawa," Ikemiyagi said.

He said the World Conservation Union has advised the Japanese government twice to cancel the project.

"Ecologists, environmental specialists as well as the Japan Federation of Bar Associations have expressed opposition," he said. "The government should heed such voices."

Meanwhile, the Naha Bureau of the Defense Facilities Administration Agency, the Japanese gov-

ernment agency in charge of the construction project, Monday informed the Okinawa prefectural government that a major platform at the site, set up in November, already has damaged corals at more than 30 locations. In a statement, DFAA said 27 corals were damaged, four completely disappeared and four were chipped away by the platform footing when it was set up, then temporarily removed in December due to a typhoon.

The U.S. and Japanese governments agreed in 1996 to close Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, located in the heart of heavily populated Ginowan City, after moving its operations elsewhere on Okinawa. Japan and the United States agreed to relocate the airport to reclaimed land and a reef about 2 miles off the coast by Henoko, and to allow the airport to be used by civilian aircraft.

The plan drew sharp criticism from local residents and anti-military activists.

Takuma Higashionna of the Dugong Network said he hoped the litigation would lead to the national government disclosing more detailed information on the project.

"For instance, they would never release the reason why drilling surveys at as many as 63 locations are necessary," he said. "Merely setting up platforms caused such damage to corals."

"Once corals are damaged, it would ruin feeding grounds of dugongs and eventually kill all the dugongs," Higashionna said. "We want the government to immediately halt the survey and construction."

In a statement Monday, the DFAA declined comment, saying it has yet to receive a copy of the lawsuit.

E-mail Chiyomi Sumida at: sumida@spjtimes.com

U.S. finds weapons cache

31st MEU troops seize arms while on patrol in Iraq

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN
Stars and Stripes

While it wasn't wrapped with a bow and placed under a tree, elements of the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit got something for Christmas that ensured the holidays are a little safer for U.S. and friendly forces in Iraq.

The Marines seized a weapons cache and detained two individuals during a security patrol south of Ar Rutbah Saturday night, according to a 31st MEU news release.

The patrol observed "14 military-grade males loading materials onto a trailer outside of a house," the release stated. When the Marines investigated, they uncovered from 50 to 75 155 mm high explosive projectiles and empty ammunition crates.

After the find was made, the house's owner and the truck's driver were detained. No casualties were reported during the operation.

Further inspection, the release stated, disclosed an ammunition crate filled with military publications, including a military-type photo album. The publications contained a picture of Saddam Hussein and photos that appeared to be of U.S. military tactics.

The 31st MEU conducts the security patrols in an effort to disrupt insurgent activities in the Al Anbar province. Seizing weapons caches decreases the insurgents' stockpile of munitions needed to produce improvised explosive devices, the release stated.

The approximately 2,300-strong 31st MEU arrived in Kuwait in September for training before heading into Iraq. The unit was to leave Iraq in January but its tour recently was extended so it could help provide security for the upcoming elections. The unit now possibly will leave the country at the end of February.

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: zimmermanf@spjtimes.com

Report: Japanese foreign minister outlines steps to U.S. realignment

BY CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura on Monday said the U.S. and Japanese governments would take a three-stage approach toward realigning U.S. Forces Japan — and its command and control.

Machimura met in his office Monday with Kanagawa Gov. Shigefumi Matsuzawa,

according to a Kanagawa Military Affairs Office spokesman. According to the spokesman, Machimura provided neither a specific timeframe for the talks nor when action might be taken but said the three-phase approach would require time, the spokeswoman reported.

The United States reportedly has proposed that Japan move Army First Corps headquarters from Washington state to Camp Zama in Kanagawa prefecture.

Matsuzawa, concerned about media reports on realignment plans, warned Machimura in October asking the government to release information on the ongoing talks, the spokeswoman said.

"For Kanagawa, where 16 U.S. military facilities are located in the midst of urban cities, realignment of [the] U.S. military in Japan is a great concern of citi-

zens," Matsuzawa wrote the foreign minister.

The report of the headquarters transfer sparked discussions among Japanese politicians and scholars because the command operation is said to cover areas including the Middle East. Scholars argue that the so-called Far East clause of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty limits the United States to use land and its military facilities in Japan only for missions that maintain peace and stability in Far East.

"The governor asked the foreign minister to release information on the talks and if an opportunity will be given to local communities to express their opinions," said the Kanagawa spokeswoman.

In a letter released by Kanagawa

prefecture, Machimura replied that plans had not yet progressed to where the government was ready to discuss USFJ realignment with communities.

"However, as the talks go on, the government will fulfill its responsibility" to provide communities "with necessary information while working closely with them," the letter stated.

Two host communities of Camp Zama — Zama City and Sagami City — have expressed their opposition to an Army First Corps move, the spokeswoman said.

"As [the] Kanagawa prefectural government, we will oppose the move, which contributes to the growth of the base functions, and consequently makes it difficult to close the base in the future," she said.

E-mail Chiyomi Sumida at: sumida@spjtimes.com

Bullet train service resumes

TOKYO — Bullet train services between Tokyo and Niigata resumed fully Tuesday, the first complete return to service since a major earthquake hit Niigata prefecture in October, East Japan Railway Company said.

The service was suspended between Echigo-Yuzawa and Nagasaki stations following the Oct. 23 earthquake.

The number of trains running back to normal and includes additional trains to accommodate a surge in riders expected for the New Year's holiday season, a spokeswoman said.

However, riders should expect arrival times approximately 10 to 15 minutes later than usual because trains will reduce speed at repaired areas, the spokeswoman said.

Court rejects restricting Yokota flight times

TOKYO — Tokyo's High Court on Monday rejected an appeal by residents living near Yokota Air Base that the U.S. government suspend early-morning and late-evening flights at Yokota, said a spokeswoman for the plaintiffs.

Ten residents filed a lawsuit in Tokyo District Court in Hachioji in 1997 and 1998 to force the U.S. government to suspend flights from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., instead of the current 8 p.m.-6 a.m. restriction.

The court rejected the request based on an earlier Supreme Court ruling that the court has no jurisdiction over another country's government, an attorney and spokesman Minoru Dobashi said.

The group appealed the decision to Tokyo High Court, which rejected the appeal, Dobashi said.

The 10 residents are members of the second and third group of residents who sought a court decision to restrict Yokota flights. The Supreme Court rejected the first group's request in April 2002.

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Analysts: Bin Laden, al-Zarqawi both get something in alliance

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An audiotape by Osama bin Laden suggests the al-Qaida chief has accepted Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi's offer to unite the world's most famous terrorist group and the bloodiest insurgency inside Iraq, national security experts say.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday the CIA technical analysis of the 2-minute, 5-second audio tape concludes with "moderate confidence" that the voice is bin Laden's. The official said the quality of the voice is poor, making it difficult to come to a more certain conclusion, but the official added that the U.S. government is operating on the assumption that the tape came from bin Laden.

Bin Laden could benefit from allying himself with an anti-American fighter who gets daily publicity. Al-Zarqawi may get more financial assistance and support from bin Laden's backers, the experts said.

But for bin Laden, the alliance comes at a price: He is now tied to a man directing bomb attacks against Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims as well as Americans.

In an audiotape broadcast Monday by Al-Jazeera satellite television, bin Laden described al-Zarqawi as the "emir," or prince, of al-Qaida in Iraq and said Muslims there should "listen to him."

He also called for a boycott of Iraqi elections planned for next month.

"Bin Laden gets the benefits of Zarqawi's notoriety," said Vince Cannistraro, former CIA counterterrorism chief. "He [al-Zarqawi] has got the pre-eminent insurgency in Iraq. He's the one who is the bloodiest, who carried out the most dramatic and public suicide bombings."

The difference between this and other bin Laden alliances, Cannistraro said, is that bin Laden — a Sunni Muslim — "has not been a vocal enemy against the Shites. By adopting Zarqawi, he's taking that whole package, someone who is virulently anti-Shite."

Dr. Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at the Rand Corp., said al-Zarqawi also gets an advantage by association with his former rival.

"Zarqawi tried to milk his broader association with bin Laden and al-Qaida to win new sources of support and recruits and finances," Hoffman said.

Hoffman, whose company is known for its problem-solving research, agreed that both men benefit from the alliance.

"I think bin Laden wants to leverage off of Zarqawi's cachet and popularity amongst radical jihadists," he said. "Zarqawi realizes that his association with al-Qaida in Iraq and bin Laden ... can pay vast dividends."



People inspect a destroyed police station 12 miles south of Tikrit, Iraq, on Tuesday. Twelve policemen died when gunmen attacked the station, one of several deadly assaults targeting Iraqi police officers Tuesday.

Militant attacks target Iraq's 19 policemen among 24 killed in multiple assaults by insurgents

BY SLOBODAN LEXIK

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents launched multiple attacks on Iraqi police across the dangerous Sunni Triangle on Tuesday, killing 24 people — including 19 policemen — a day after the major Sunni Muslim political party pulled out of the Jan. 30 elections citing the deteriorating security situation.

Also Tuesday, a militant group claimed to have executed eight Iraqi employees of the Saudi

Group, an American security company, saying they had supported the U.S.-led occupation. The claim could not be independently verified.

Twelve policemen died when gunmen attacked a station 12 miles south of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, said Arkan Mohammed, a local government official.

A car bomb killed five Iraqi National Guardsmen and injured 26 near Baquba, a town 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, after the paramilitary troops had cordoned off an area in order to disarm a roadside bomb, said Maj. Neal O'Brien.

In Baquba, gunmen assassinated Capt. Na'em Muhammad Abdulhal, a local police commander, and wounded three other men, a spokesman said.

Elsewhere Tuesday, a car bomb exploded in the village of Muradiya, 18 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing five civilians and wounding dozens, said Dr. Ahmed Fouad of the Baquba General Hospital.

In Mosul, a gunman attacked a police station in the Hadba district, killing one policeman, police Capt. Ahmed Khalil.

In another blow to plans to hold the ballot as scheduled, the largest Sunni political group withdrew from the race Monday, only hours after a suicide car bomber killed 15 people in Baghdad in an attempt to assassinate the head of Iraq's strongest Shiite party.

The rebels campaign to disrupt the elections for a new constitutional assembly has steadily escalated in recent weeks, and most Sunni parties and religious groups have already decided to boycott the ballot, calling for a postponement of the vote until the security situation stabilizes.

Iraq's national security adviser, Qassem Dawoud, called on Syria to turn in Saddam Hussein loyalists who are helping insurgents in Iraq and to help secure its border. He said that Sabaawi

al-Hassan, one of Saddam's half brothers, and a Saddam loyalist named Yousif al-Ahmed are supporting the insurgency from Syria.

"We hope the Syrian government ... will cooperate with us on drying the sources of terrorism in its territories and limiting the movements of Saddamists there," Dawoud told the Al-Rai Al-Aam daily during a visit to Kuwait.

Insurgents have mainly targeted members of the interim government's security forces — whom they consider to be collaborators with the American occupation forces — killing hundreds in the past two months.

The 10 employees of Sandi Group were kidnapped west of Baghdad on Dec. 13 by militants claiming to represent the Mujahideen Army, The Black Banner Brigade, and the Mutassim Belal Brigade.

"Eight have been executed because it was proven that they were supporting the occupying army. The other two will be released for lack of evidence," a statement said.

In the city of Samarra, a suicide attacker detonated his car in the center of a crowd wounding 10 people, including three children, police Maj. Saadoun Ahmed Matrouf.

Shortly after the explosion, people were told through mosques loud speakers to stay inside because of a curfew, and U.S. and Iraq troops set up roadblocks, witnesses said. Also in Samarra, U.S. troops killed three gunmen when they attacked an American post, the military said. No U.S. service members were wounded.

Several mortar rounds targeted an Iraqi police station in Mufrigi, north of Baghdad, injuring three policemen, said Lt. Saleh Hussein. The three were hospitalized. In Babil province south of Baghdad, police said they arrested 10 armed men in a raid in the area of Jhila after intelligence indicated the suspects were allegedly plotting to attack a police station there, Capt. Hady Hatfi said.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Monday, at least 1,325 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,038 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Monday.

The British military has reported 75 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,187 U.S. military members have died, ac-

cording to AP's count. That includes at least 925 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military: ■ A soldier was killed Sunday by an explosive in Samarra, Iraq.

■ A soldier was killed Monday by an explosive in Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

Killed Thursday in Iraq's Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.:

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Eric Hillenburg, 21, Marietta, Ind.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. James R. Phillips, 21, Florida.

■ Marine Cpl. Raleigh C. Smith, 21, Lincoln, Mont.

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Americans going online to support troops

Web sites get specific when it comes to donations for servicemembers in Iraq

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The staff at Walter Reed Army Medical Center asked Monday that no more phone cards or other goods be collected and sent to Walter Reed through February.

Such is the crush of support for troops serving or wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Internet has made much of this revolution in giving possible, with Web sites popping up regularly to help the public support their support and to try to make life a little better for some servicemember downrange.

Helping troops communicate with distant loved ones is a popular and practical way people are helping.

Last week, Democracy for America, former presidential candidate Howard Dean's new political action committee, donated 200,000 minutes of phone cards to patients at veterans' hospitals in seven states.

Also last week, the Capital One finance company announced it would donate its

video teleconferencing facilities in McLean, Va., and Richmond, Va., from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST on Dec. 30 to connect local family members with their troops in Camp Taji (aka Camp Cooke) and Camp Fallujah.

The gesture is being made in conjunction with the Freedom Calls Foundation, www.freedomcalls.org, a New York-based nonprofit organization that links military personnel and their families worldwide.

Operation Troop Appreciation, one of many philanthropic "operations," has fielded requests and outfitted 1,000 troops with T-shirts, socks and underwear, recently throwing a party and raffle at Finnigan's Wake, a bar in Pittsburgh.

A nonprofit was started by Kristen Holloway and fellow students at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh.

Holloway asked a friend whose brother was in Iraq what he needed. When told he needed T-shirts for his platoon, Holloway solicited the help of friends and family and eventually tapped the talents of the business school to set up a nonprofit.

Books for Soldiers, at www.booksfor-soldiers.com, which calls itself "Care Packages for the Mind," was started during the first Gulf War to alleviate servicemembers' boredom during downtimes.

Troops sent in addresses, which book donors can see on a message board, to make books or other requested items. The site offers mailing tips such as keeping the packages small to ensure swift delivery.

Two authors of parenting books want servicemembers and their families to have their e-books, free of charge.

This site www.gifformilitaryfamilies.com, offers a "care package from the heart."

Erin Brown Conroy, mother of 12 and author of "20 Secrets to Success with Your Child," and Mort Fertel, who penned "Marriage Fitness" which he calls a step-by-step system for getting any marriage in top shape, are offered free of charge to family members of deployed servicemembers.

Another site, www.operationfirstrespon.se.org, focuses on wounded troops, not just at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospi-

tal in Maryland, but with 11 combat support hospitals in Iraq and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany as well.

They cut to the quick: With online donations, they buy a backpack and fill it with items the troops and family members always say are needed: socks, underwear, a toothbrush, razors, a 100-minute phone card and such.

Though storage facilities at Walter Reed are full, there is always a need for cash donations to the organizations that provide support to servicemembers at Walter Reed and at other military hospitals.

Some cited here the Walter Reed Society, at www.wramc.amedd.army.mil/wr-society/; the Fisher House, at <http://fisherhouse.org>; or the American Red Cross at www.redcross.org.

Many other worthwhile organizations are listed at the "Support Our Troops" link in the Department of Defense Web site, www.defendamerica.mil/support-troops.html or at www.stripes.com, where you can find a link to American Supports You, a Web site where such organizations can get their word out.

E-mail notification: dickson@stripes.osd.mil

Army chief says Iraq war 'going pretty well'

BY JOSH WHITE

The Washington Post

TIKRTI, Iraq — Gen. Peter Schoomaker, the Army's chief of staff, made a surprise visit to a small group of soldiers here at Forward Operating Base Langer, and said in an interview that the war in Iraq is "going pretty well."

"Everybody I talk to has a balanced view and understands a challenge is ahead of us," Schoomaker said. "It's an important time. It's tough, it's a battle of wills, and we're going to stick with it."

In an unannounced visit, Schoomaker arrived at this northern Iraq city late Sunday and shared dinner with a group of about two dozen Army soldiers who have recently decided to re-enlist. Schoomaker arrived at the base's mess hall after 7 p.m. to a band softly playing Christmas songs and soldiers eagerly awaiting a snack next to him.

"I don't know of a time when an army could do this job as well as this one is doing," Schoomaker said after a quick meal with a gaggle of soldiers, officers and Maj. Gen. John R. Baptiste, who commands the 1st Infantry Division. "I'm very proud of you."



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker, left, on Sunday awards the Purple Heart medal to Sgt. Douglas McManama of Sandston, Va., at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. McManama was injured during the recent suicide bomber attack in the dining facility.

Schoomaker's visit was the third on the part of top Pentagon officials in recent days. Soldiers in Tikrit also met with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during his whirlwind Christmas Eve tour of Iraq on Friday, and Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ushered a USO troupe through Iraq earlier this month.

Schoomaker, wearing the Army's newly designed all-purpose camouflage uniform, presented each of the soldiers he met with a commemorative command coin in the shape of a dog tag.

He said the dog tag symbolizes "what armies are for; armies are there to fight."

"You've made an important commitment," Schoomaker told the soldiers as they stood around a dining table in a corner of the mess hall. "The thing that gives me the most optimism for our country is you. I know some of you are going to be members of Congress, leaders of industry, leaders of the Army. You're just extraordinary."

Schoomaker spent his holiday weekend visiting troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, personally re-enlisting soldiers in both countries and awarding some soldiers their purple heart awards for combat injuries.

Earlier in the day, he visited soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division in the Baghdad area.

Iraqi infiltration into U.S. bases no secret

Officials say problem is unavoidable

BY NICK WADHAMS

The Associated Press

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — American commanders are fully aware that Iraq's insurgents exploit their policy of employing locals on U.S. military bases but insist the practice will not stop, though some security measures may be tightened.

The vulnerability of the American stance was exposed on Dec. 21, when an Iraqi suicide bomber dressed in a military uniform detonated his explosives at a mess hall at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, killing 22 people including 13 U.S. servicemembers.

Since then, security has been tightened atchow halls in some camps, with military guards demanding proof of identification more often and not allowing backpacks. Officials say they are constantly reviewing procedures to make sure such an attack doesn't happen again, but insurgents infiltrating camps is unavoidable.

They're trying to infiltrate the base as much as possible, taking pictures, videos, drawing diagrams, grabbing people who are coming off base to intimidate them into giving them locations where different facilities are located on the base or torturing them until they do tell them," said Lt. Col. Dan Wilson, deputy for current operations for the 1st Marine Division. "We know it is active and ongoing."

Officials describe force protection as a game of cat-and-mouse, constantly refining tactics on base to counter changes by Iraq's insurgents.

One aspect the insurgents also appear to have exploited is the American desire to give Iraqi security forces a greater role, to treat them more as equals and to try to get them to do their jobs on their own, without U.S. supervision.

While Iraqis who work on bases are vetted, Americans acknowledge that they don't do security checks on Iraqi forces on base, instead leaving that task to their local counterparts.

"We don't do a systematic vetting process on Iraqi security forces, their government that does that," Wilson said. "There's a certain trust factor that goes along with the Marines working with them."

Wilson said top-level military staff had asked bases to re-evaluate how they go about force protection, but things like allowing Iraqis on base would not change. Wilson refused to say what sort of ideas were being discussed, only that the ideas were being passed around with the goal of enhancing security.

Some changes have been more visible. Guards at mess halls are stricter about enforcing a policy that badges be visibly displayed.

At the gym at Camp Fallujah, only those with Department of Defense badges are now allowed.

"Of course everybody is afraid, these people are criminals who will do anything to hurt people," said one Iraqi man working at Camp Fallujah, an electrician who identified himself as Mohammad.

"But we can't find a good job except of these types of places."

Happy New Year from your Yokosuka MWR

Officers' Club 243-5002

2005 Inagural Sunday Brunch January 2

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Mongolian Barbecue Tuesdays

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New Year's Eve Holiday Celebration December 31 from 2100 to 0200

Ring in the New Year dancing to the music of our live band. There'll be free hors d'oeuvres, party favors and champagne for midnight toasting.

Latin Night with DJ Martha Thursdays

Sharky's from 2000 to 2400

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Upper Deck Sports Bar from 1700 to 1900

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Sharky's from 2100 to 0200

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9-Ball Mondays at 1900

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Bingo! Join us at Club Alliance Every Saturday

at 1200 for your chance to take home grand prizes of \$2,500, \$5,000 or \$10,000 and a guaranteed \$1,000 giveaway for the last game. Can't wait till the weekend? Then join us at the CPO Club every Tuesday & Thursday at 2000

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Club Takemiya 246-8075

New Year's Eve Bash December 31 from 2000 to 0200

Party away the last minutes of 2004 at our ultimate New Year's Eve bash! With our slammin' DJ pumping up all of your favorite jams from past and present, party favors, a glass of champagne for a toast and a special finger food buffet at 0030 for only \$8.

Eddie Cotton Performance January 1, 15 and 29 from 1700 to 2100

Enjoy this outstanding performer live on keyboards

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Mongolian Barbecue Sundays

Seaside Club 243-3379

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Mongolian Barbecue Saturdays

Couple's Night Special January 7 from 1700 to 2100

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Prime Rib Night Saturdays

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Enjoy free fountain soda during our Chinese Night and Beef and Burgundy Night buffets.

"Tweak the Dinner Menu" Month January 1 - 31

Look for several new entree size salads and other CPO traditions on our menu this month.

National Spaghetti Day January 4

Let your children, up to seven years of age, eat spaghetti for free.



IN THE WORLD



Supporters of Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko celebrate Monday in Kiev's Independence Square. Final preliminary results showed Yushchenko's win in the presidential election was decisive.

Yushchenko reportedly won by more than 2 million votes

BY ANNA MELNICHUK

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Final preliminary results showed opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko had won Ukraine's drawn-out and divisive presidential election, while pressure built Tuesday on his opponent, Kremlin favorite Viktor Yanukovich, to concede and abandon his vow to challenge the rerun election.

Yushchenko won 51.99 percent to Yanukovich's 44.19 percent in Sunday's court-ordered rerun of the vote, according to a final preliminary vote tally — a difference of about 2.3 million votes.

"In principle, we have the result," said Yaroslav Davydovych, the head of the Central Election Commission. "I don't know who can doubt it."

Yanukovich, who returned to work Tuesday as prime minister, has refused to concede defeat and said he will challenge the results in Ukraine's Supreme Court. He said his campaign team had nearly 5,000 complaints about how the voting was conducted and claimed that 4.8 million people — more than double the margin of Yushchenko's victory — had been unable to cast ballots, among them disabled and elderly voters.

Ukraine's parliament approved restrictions on voting at home in a bid to prevent fraud, but the Constitutional Court threw out the restrictions on the eve of the vote. Many people, however, were unaware of the ruling. Yanukovich's campaign said.

Yanukovich's vow to challenge the results echoes Yushchenko's successful move following the fraud-tainted Nov. 21 runoff, which the court annulled, leading to Sunday's rerun. But that ruling came amid widespread complaints from foreign monitors that the Nov. 21 vote was unfair; this time, monitors have said they didn't see mass violations.

Yanukovich's team has yet to file an appeal, and the Central Election Commission's Davydovych said that many of the complaints they had received, purportedly from individual voters, were "printed on the same computer, with the same text, the same envelopes."

"This is on the conscience of those who do that," Davydovych said.

President Leonid Kuchma, in the runoff to Sunday's vote, urged both candidates to accept the official result and not appeal. And the Council of Europe, the continent's top human rights watchdog, also called on Yanukovich on Tuesday to accept defeat.

"I call on all parties to accept the verdict of the ballot box and to refrain from rhetoric which may fuel division in Ukraine," said Terry Davis, the council's secretary general.

Ukraine's east-west divide has deepened during the bitter and protracted election campaign. The Russian-speaking, heavily industrialized east backed Yanukovich, while cosmopolitan Kiev and the nationalistic west supported Yushchenko.

Honduras examining if bus massacre weapons came from military employee

The Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Government officials said Tuesday they are investigating Honduran news media reports that a military employee sold gang members the automatic weapons used in last week's attack on a public bus that left 28 people dead.

According to reports in the daily El Heraldo, La Tribuna and Tiempo, four members of the violent Mara Salvatrucha gang bought an unidentified number of Kalashnikov rifles used in the killings from an army captain last Wednesday, a day before they carried out the massacre. The reports did not

identify the captain, but said he lives in the capital, Tegucigalpa. He reportedly sold the weapons for \$1,700.

"This surprises us, but we are investigating it," Defense Minister Federico Breve told The Associated Press. "We want to get to the bottom of this."

Breve did not rule out the possibility that the seller disguised him or herself as military personnel "to hurt the armed forces."

The government of President Ricardo Maduro has blamed the massacre on the Mara Salvatrucha, saying they were seeking revenge for the government's crackdown on gangs, as well as trying to outdo the rival gang Mara 18, which recently

killed two security guards while freeing a fellow gang member from a hospital.

Nine gang members have been arrested and charged in connection with the killings, although police say they believe only four of the gang members actually did the shooting.

The Mara Salvatrucha is considered to be better organized than the Mara 18, but both are known for their violent methods. Both gangs, which claim about 100,000 members all together, have controlled the poor neighborhoods of Honduras' largest cities since 1995.

Thousands of soldiers were patrolling streets throughout Honduras to prevent additional gang violence.

Saddam's billions possibly smuggled

Investigator: Majority of illegal money not from oil-for-food deal

BY EDITH M. LEDERER

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Paul Volcker, who is heading an investigation of alleged corruption in the U.N. oil-for-food program, said in an interview that most of the money illegally obtained by Saddam Hussein was from smuggling, which was known by the U.N. Security Council but not stopped.

In the interview set for broadcast Tuesday with Alhurra, the U.S. government-backed television station tailored for Arab audiences, Volcker questioned the reliability of reports that Saddam diverted amounts ranging from \$1.7 billion to \$21 billion from the \$40 billion oil-for-food program.

The former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman said there was a lot of confusion

about how money from smuggling and money obtained illegally under the oil-for-food program, and he refused to say any estimates.

"The big figures that you see in the press, which are sometimes labeled oil-for-food — the big figures are smuggling, which took place before the oil-for-food program started and it continued while the oil-for-food program was in place," he said, according to a transcript obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

The Security Council authorized the oil-for-food program to help Iraqis cope with U.N. sanctions imposed after Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Launched in December 1996, it allowed the former Iraqi regime to sell oil provided the money went primarily to buy humanitarian goods and pay reparations to victims of the 1991 Gulf War.

Saddam's government decided on the goods it wanted, who

should provide them, and who could buy Iraqi oil — but the Security Council committees overseeing sanctions monitored the contracts.

In a report in October, top U.S. weapons investigator Charles Duelfer said Saddam was able to "subvert" the oil-for-food program to generate an estimated \$1.7 billion in revenue outside U.N. control from 1997-2003. In addition, Iraq brought in more than \$8 billion in illicit oil deals with Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Egypt through smuggling or illegal pumping from 1991-2003 when sanctions were in place, he said.

U.S. congressional investigators reported in November that Saddam made more than \$21.3 billion in illegal revenue — over \$13 billion from 1991-2003 and about \$7 billion by subverting the oil-for-food program.

"Without question, [there were] problems in the oil-for-food area. But ... most of those numbers are so-called smuggling."

Paul Volcker

"Without question, [there were] problems in the oil-for-food area," Volcker said. "But when you look at those \$10 billion figures, most of those numbers are so-called smuggling, much of which was known and taken off by the Security Council, but not stopped."

Volcker refused to speculate on why the council didn't stop the smuggling, but indicated the issue likely would be addressed in his reports. An initial report is expected in January and a final report in the summer, he said.

Volcker stressed that the investigation isn't just focusing on whether U.N. officials may be guilty of corruption, he said, but on other issues: Did U.N. officials follow proper procedures? Was there "bad administration rather than corrupt administration?" What were the directions from the Security Council, and what was its responsibility?

Aftershock in Japan

TOKYO — An aftershock to a strong earthquake that rocked northern Japan in October struck the same region late Tuesday, but there was no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

The quake, which hit at 6:30 p.m., had a preliminary magnitude of 4.9 and was centered in the Misaki area of Niigata prefecture at a depth of about 6 miles, the Meteorological Agency said.

A magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck the area on Oct. 23.

Fly to the space station

MOSCOW — Russia plans to stop giving American astronauts free rides on its spacecraft to the international space station beginning in 2006, the head of Russia's space agency said Tuesday.

Anatoly Perminov said the no-cost agreement between NASA and Russia's space agency Roskosmos could be replaced by a barter arrangement, according to the Interfax news agency.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Weather causes trouble in Calif.

Heavy rain brings floods, mudslides

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A powerful storm moved along the coast Tuesday, causing heavy flooding, mudslides, flooding and power outages. Up to a foot of rain was possible in one mountain area.

Police said the weather may have contributed to the death of a young man who apparently tried to surf in 10- to 12-foot waves.

"It's really rough out there," said Paul Cole, a fire official at Half Moon Bay, describing the surf where the young man was found.

Highway flooding caused traffic accidents early Tuesday in Ventura and Los Angeles counties. A mudslide in Santa Barbara County closed northbound lanes of Highway 101, backing up traffic for about 20 miles, said Danette Yriarte, a dispatch supervisor for the California Highway Patrol.

Southern California Edison

said about 10,000 customers complained of lasting power outages. "The coastal communities within five miles of the coast are taking quite a pounding," utility spokesman Marlon Walker said.

Meteorologists said up to 12 inches of rain was possible by afternoon in the mountains above Santa Barbara, with 10 inches predicted in the mountains and foothills surrounding the Los Angeles Basin.

Flash flood watches were issued for Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The storm already had caused similar problems in northern California.

Two to 4 feet of snow was possible at higher elevations of the eastern Sierra Nevada and the Lake Tahoe area, the National Weather Service said. On Monday, San Francisco was hit by more than 3 inches of rain that delayed flights at San Francisco International Airport. North of San Francisco, Marin County got 6 inches of rain.

Doctors, pharmacists charged with selling samples

PHILADELPHIA — Federal prosecutors have charged three pharmacists and two doctors with selling hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of drug samples. Prosecutors in criminal cases filed Monday accused the doctors of selling pharmaceuticals thousands of free pills given to them by pharmaceutical companies as part of promotional programs. The pharmacists then punched the pills out of their sample-size packets and mingled them with other medications for resale to patients, the government claimed.

From The Associated Press



Dan Brady, lead ballot counting observer in King County for the Washington state Republican party, uses an enlarged sample of a ballot Monday to explain what he believes are discrepancies in vote counting during a news conference in Seattle. King County is the center of debate in the hotly contested governor's race.

GOP demands Wash. voter list

BY DAVID AMMONS

The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington Republicans, girding for a possible court challenge of Democrat

Christine Gregoire's razor-thin victory for governor, on Monday demanded a list of the 900,000 who cast ballots in vote-rich, problem-plagued King County.

Democrats asked the Republicans of being on "a fishing expedition" and urged them to concede or face the public's wrath for dragging out an election already eight weeks old.

Republican state Chairman Chris Vance said his party and

other backers of GOP candidate Dino Rossi have nagging questions about the vote counts in the county that tipped the race to Gregoire by a scant 130 votes last week.

"We want to know who voted in the election, and it's hard to know where we go from here [with a possible court challenge] before we get some answers," Vance said in an interview.

"We're mostly posing questions. King County is where we saw the votes changing. King County is the one county that was allowed to take ballots that were declared dead in November and bring them back to life in December."

He stepped short of committing to a court challenge of the election results. Some party activists worry that further litigation and delay could rebound on the GOP and damage Rossi's political future.

"I get the clear signal from Dino Rossi that he's not going to do anything unless there is a solid case," Vance said.

He declined to say whether he's advising a court fight, but he said "Overwhelmingly, from the grass roots of the party, the feeling is 'Don't give up. Keep fighting.'"

But he said there's no rush, since any voter can contest the election within 10 days after certification.

"Right now, we need information. We don't need to rush. Now that we're past Christmas and past the shock [of losing in the latest recount], people are able to focus on what comes next."

Secretary of State Sam Reed on Thursday will certify the latest recount, an unprecedented state-wide hand tally that last week put three-term attorney general Gregoire ahead by 130 votes out of more than 2.8 million cast. Previous counts had favored Rossi, an affluent former state senator.

Reed's office said outgoing Gov. Gary Locke offered to send a state airplane to McMinville, Ore., to fetch Reed so he could certify the election on Monday.



Gregoire

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STARS AND STRIPES

Improved rocket fuel tank paves way for NASA launch

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a major step toward resuming launches of the space shuttle, NASA officials said Tuesday they have completed improvements that will prevent the falling debris problem that destroyed space shuttle Columbia and killed seven astronauts.

The first improved and redesigned tank will be further tested at Kennedy Space Center, mounted on space shuttle Discovery and readied for a launch in May or June, officials said.

Sandy Coleman, NASA's external project manager, said that testing of improvements on the tank "gives us confidence that problems like what happened on Columbia will not happen again."

"This is the safest, most reliable tank NASA has ever produced," Coleman said Tuesday in a telephone news conference from the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala.

The changes in the external tank add less than 150 pounds in weight. The added costs are still being tallied, said Coleman. The old style fuel tanks cost about \$40 million.

The external tank contains liquid hydrogen and oxygen, which are the propellants used by the shuttle's main rocket engines during launch. The supercooled propellants cause the formation of ice on the outside of the tank as the shuttle is prepared for launch.

Insulation, applied as a foam, reduces the amount of ice. But investigators believe chunks of the foam insulation peeled off the external tank during launch and led to the destruction of Columbia on Feb. 1, 2003.

Redesign of the external tank was considered to be a key part of NASA's effort to return the shuttle to space, but is only one of a list of recommendations from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

Airports testing search methods

The Associated Press

GRAPEVINE, Texas — Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport is one of 16 airports chosen nationwide to test equipment that expands the use of security technology and may limit the need for pat-down searches, officials said.

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration did not say what equipment or procedure the airport would test or when testing would begin, but nine other airports have been chosen to test two machines designed to check airplane passengers for explosives.

The technology could limit the need for pat-down searches many women say are intrusive because they require screeners to feel between and around the breasts when passengers set off a metal detector.

The first test is a walk-through portal that blows a puff of air on passengers and then analyzes the air for explosive traces.

The second, a backscatter X-ray, allows screeners to see through clothing for dense objects, such as plastic explosives. Earlier versions of the X-ray drew criticism because the images were too revealing; new models use a generic body diagram.

"The technology is a much more advanced procedure to detect the very threats that we look for as manual pat-downs," said Andrea McQuilly, a TSA spokeswoman.

The testing is part of the intelligence reform bill, which urged the security administration to expand the use of explosive-detection equipment and other measures.

The bill also calls for more research into cargo that can withstand a blast, systems that counter shoulder-fired missiles and the discreet notification of pilots about security breaches in the airplane cabin.

The test sites were chosen based on the number of passengers, geographic location, proximity to a manufacturer, congressional interest, checkpoint design and the airport's experience testing new equipment.

Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport is the nation's third-busiest airport and already is testing explosives-detection machines, used commonly on checkers, at the airport's cargo facilities.

Report: Security priorities ignored

Homeland security money not allocated to top needs, watchdog says

BY SAM HANANEL

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Homeland Security Department has allowed federal grants for improving security at America's ports to be spent on low-priority problems rather than the most serious vulnerabilities, the agency's outgoing watchdog says.

In a draft report to be released next month, Homeland Security Department Inspector General Clark Kent Ervin says port security spending should be governed by the most pressing priorities rather than local politics.

Blaming inadequate staffing and poor coordination, Ervin said the department's port security grant program needs better oversight to make sure projects that get money meet security goals.

"The DHS does not have a strong grant evaluation process in place by which to address post-award administration issues, including measuring progress in accomplishing DHS' grant objectives," Ervin said in a recent summary of the report.

The summary was contained in another report from Ervin's office, "Major Management Challenges Facing the Department of Homeland Security," which was posted on the DHS web site.

The grant program has been criticized in the past for being too cumbersome and for awarding money to projects of questionable use.

To make his point, Ervin cited the report of the Sept. 11 commission, which said homeland security spending should not be used as a "pork barrel" for politicians to send money to their home districts.

The report is one of the last submitted by Ervin, who earned a reputation as a blunt critic of the department before leaving the job earlier this month. Ervin won a recess appointment to the position in December 2003, but the Senate failed to confirm him and the White House appeared unlikely to nominate him again.

DHS spokesman Brian Roelke said he declined to comment until the full report is completed, but said the department had streamlined its grant processes earlier this year.

"We have made progress in integrating all of the previous disaster grant programs from the agencies that created DHS into one office in the department that is ensuring all grant dollars are maximized and spent according to a strategy outlining the greatest needs," Roelke said.

DHS manages several grant programs, totaling about \$10 billion last year, that provide money for disaster preparedness, prevention, response and recovery. The agency has distributed about \$560 million for port security over the past few years.

Despite consolidation of the grant program offices, Ervin said "much work remains to be done" and noted that department officials planned to increase staff to allow for more site visits and improved oversight of grant-funded projects.

Robert Ashbaugh, spokesman for acting Inspector General Richard L. Skinner, said the report has been circulated to officials in the agency for comments.

"They will have an opportunity to provide a response and state whether they agree to take corrective action," Ashbaugh said.

Investigation ordered into airlines canceling flights over holidays

BY DAVID B. CARUSO

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The nation's top transportation official ordered an investigation of two airlines that canceled hundreds of flights over the holiday weekend because of computer and staffing problems, stranding thousands of travelers.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta asked the agency's inspector general to investigate the difficulties at US Airways and Delta subsidiary Comair, which had to ground 1,100 flights Saturday because of a computer problem.

Mineta said Monday in a letter to the agency's inspector general that people "must learn from the situations" to make sure they do not happen again.

US Airways Group Inc. was forced to cancel hundreds of flights and strand thousands of passengers between Thursday and Sunday because about triple the usual number of flight attendants called in sick.

Adding to US Airways' woes, an unusually high number of baggage handlers at Philadelphia's airport failed to report to work, the airline said, and the remaining staff became overwhelmed by a mountain of luggage.

Operations at the bankrupt company returned to near-normal on Monday, although workers were still trying to reunite people with their bags.

Comair also was returning to normal, with only eight of its flights listed as delayed Tuesday on the monitors at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, where the airline is based. Rows of baggage not yet delivered were piling up, and it was considered from Monday, when they stretched longer than a football field.

Comair President Randy Rademacher promised cooperation with the DOT probe.

Union leaders at US Airways continued to blame staff shuffling, denying that workers had staged a sickout to penalize the company for slashing their pay.

"We are so short-staffed, if there is spit on the runway in Philadelphia, it causes a fiasco," said Teddy Xidas, president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the Association of Flight Attendants.

Of about 1,675 flight attendants scheduled to work Thursday, Friday and Saturday, about 300 called in sick daily, more than expected based on past holidays, US Airways spokesman Chris Chiamess said. The carrier usually plans for about 100 such absences.

"To suggest it was somehow a staffing issue on our part is to shift attention away from the employees who chose to do this," Chiamess said.

Alarm bells about a looming staffing crisis in Philadelphia apparently began sounding at least five days before Christmas and two days before snow began causing flight disruptions in Indiana and Ohio.

"I would not fly through [Philadelphia] this weekend," one Internet poster warned Dec. 20 in a forum frequented by airline employees on the site USaviation.com.

The writer warned that a wave of US Airways baggage handlers were likely to skip work over the holidays, either because they were upset with the struggling company's latest proposals to trim pay and benefits, or because they were planning to retire and were using up spare sick days.

US Airways has been trying to cut costs to avoid liquidation.



Jackie Martin-Downs, of Detroit, looks for her luggage Monday at the baggage claim area inside the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in Hebron, Ky., as airlines struggled to recover from delays and mix-ups caused by Comair's holiday weekend cancellations.

Experts: Technology available to stop airline computer issues

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The cancellation of 1,100 Christmas Day flights by Comair because of computer troubles is prompting calls for more investments in backup systems and other technologies to prevent further groundings and damage to an already struggling industry.

The foul-up was hardly the first. A computer glitch grounded 40 Delta flights in May. A power failure created a computer problem that forced Northwest to cancel more than 120 flights in July. A worker keystroke error grounded or delayed some American and US Airways flights in August.

"Obviously, the airlines have become way too dependent on computers," said Terry Trippier, an airline industry expert in Minneapolis.

Bruce Schneider, a computer security expert in Mountain View, Calif., said the issue boils down to cost versus benefit.

Airlines could upgrade existing computers to handle more transactions, install sophisticated backup systems that can come on when the primary system fails or buy high-performance software that is used by NASA, nuclear plants and medical facilities to keep critical systems running at all times, Schneider said.

"It's certainly feasible, but it's my guess [is] it's not economic," Schneider said. "My guess is it is cheaper for the airline to absorb this loss, which doesn't happen often, than to fix the problem."

Comair spokesman Nick Miller said the Delta subsidiary already had planned to replace its scheduling system with one that can handle more transactions, but the new system was not set to come online until mid-January.

Tim Wagner, spokesman for American Airlines parent AMR Corp. of Fort Worth, Texas, said the carrier already has solidified a backup system to prevent problems like it had faced in August.

Time's almost up for renters on park land

BY BEN FOX

The Associated Press

CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK, Calif.—Residents of a mobile home park on the Pacific Ocean have long enjoyed a low-cost version of the California dream, paying hundreds in rent on million-dollar real estate.

But for 25 years they knew the clock was ticking on that dream: The state, which owns the land under their homes, would eventually ask them to leave so it could expand the surrounding Crystal Cove State Park and allow public

access to undeveloped back country and pristine shoreline.

The day of reckoning has arrived: Barring a last-minute court reprieve, nearly 300 families who rent at El Morro Village mobile home park must give up their homes in one of the most expensive areas in the United States.

"It's the end of a romantic era when you could live in a funky little beach place for a little bit of money," said Greg Wise, 49, whose father's mobile home has been a family gathering spot since 1974. "It's sad."

Resident Vicki Gorham says

some residents — the number is in dispute — are on fixed incomes and will have to move far inland to find a place they can afford. Residents pay between about \$400 and \$1,200 per month for rent, depending on the size and location of their lot.

The mobile homes sit inside Crystal Cove State Park between ritzy Laguna Beach and Newport Beach, where few houses sell for less than \$1 million.

A California bought the land from a developer in 1979 for \$32 million, at the time the most expensive purchase ever for the state park system. The state didn't have

the money to fully develop the park then, so it made a deal with the mobile home residents: They could stay for two decades on month-to-month leases in lieu of relocation payments. When the 20 years was up, the state still was not ready and extended the leases five years — until Dec. 31.

The park includes 240 acres of back country and seven coves along 3.2 miles of smooth beach and tide pools. Coyotes and threatened shore birds roam the sand. Dolphins, sea lions and the occasional gray whale can be spotted from 80-foot bluffs that shelter the coves from the bustle of nearby coastal Highway 1.

There are areas set aside for fishing, diving and surfing in coves once used by bootleggers to smuggle booze and by Hollywood to film deserted beach scenes.

A state judge ruled this month that the El Morro tenants had adequate notice and that evictions could proceed.

Residents filed an emergency appeal of that decision and also are hoping for a favorable ruling in a federal lawsuit challenging the state's compliance with environmental regulations. The state has said it will begin eviction proceedings on Jan. 17, after a hearing in federal court.



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Woman accused of taking fetus fits profile

BY TODD C. FRANKEL

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — In the first hours after Bobbie Jo Stinnett was murdered and her fetus cut from her womb, police and the FBI hunted for two men and a woman, based on a witness' report. They chased down a tip about a ring of thieves planning to sell the infant for \$30,000 on the black market.

But John Rabun, who has studied hundreds of infant abductions for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, knew who authorities should look for: A woman of child-bearing age who lives with a man. She is feigning her own pregnancy. She did this alone. She won't hurt this new infant. She'll parade the newborn around like a proud parent. And her husband will not have a clue.

The center dispatched two infant abduction experts to the scene to help investigators. And when an arrest was made, Rabun's profile fit snugly around the alleged culprit, Lisa M. Montgomery.

"It's always a woman," Rabun explained last week. "This is a peculiar crime. Could a guy do it? Probably. But unlikely."

Rabun's experience with infant abductors extends from newborns plucked from hospitals to the most extreme and rare form, like the case in Skidmore, Mo. He

co-authored a forensics study, "Newborn Kidnapping by Cesarean Section."

What emerges from the work of Rabun and other experts is a picture of women so desperate for a baby they go to any ends to get one. Often the women hope a child will cement a failing relationship with a man.

"It's just so narcissistic. It's incredible," Rabun said. "It's her needs above everyone else's."

In studying these cases, Rabun wanted to learn how to stop them. In the late 1980s, he wrote guidelines for preventing infant kidnappings from hospital maternity wards — the places where this crime most often occurred. Today, most hospitals teach staff to take precautions and use security measures akin to anti-shoplifting devices on newborns.

As a result, in-hospital abductions have plummeted from 12 to 18 a year in the United States to just two or three.

That success arrived with unintended consequences. Hospitals are "hardened targets," says Rabun. Potential kidnappers are thwarted.

Still, these women want a baby. Abductions outside the hospital have not jumped notably — they too are still rare. But experts do believe there is more pressure for kidnappings outside the hospital.

"Unfortunately, there are still women out there who want a baby who are going other places," said Ann Burgess, a Boston College professor and lead author on the newborn kidnapping study.

The study examined 199 nonfamily infant abductions in the United States from 1983 to 2000. Only six of these cases involved forced C-sections.

It was a 1987 case in Albuquerque, N.M., that first sparked researchers' interest in this kind of crime. Darci Page, 19, staked out a prenatal clinic and forced a pregnant woman at gunpoint to an isolated desert area. The mother was strangled and her stomach sliced open with a set of car keys. Page claimed to have given birth while driving. But a hospital exam revealed she'd never been pregnant. The baby survived. Page's husband had no idea what his wife had done.

After stealing Stinnett's baby, Montgomery drove back to Kansas and called her husband, the FBI said. She told him she'd given birth at a Topeka mall and asked to meet him at a Long John Silver's parking lot.

He had no idea what she'd done, authorities say.

Montgomery, 36, is mother to four children. She has no children with her current husband. In recent months, she'd posted on an online message board that she was pregnant again. But her ex-husband claims Montgomery couldn't be pregnant now because she had a tubal ligation in 1990, said attorney James R. Campbell of Burlington, Kan.

Campbell represents Montgomery's ex-husband, Carl Boman, in a custody battle. Boman had twice married Montgomery for a total of 12 years.

Montgomery has lied about being pregnant before, Boman's attorney said.

"She had made claims in the early '90s on at least two separate occasions that she was pregnant," Campbell said.

Montgomery traveled to Stinnett's rural Nowaday County home Dec. 16 under the



Victoria Jo Stinnett, the newborn baby of slain mother Bobbie Jo Stinnett of Maryville, Mo., is seen in this image taken from video released last week.

pretense of being "Darlene Fischer," a woman interested in rat terrier dogs, which Stinnett bred, the FBI said. Stinnett was eight months pregnant. The two women had talked online.

At some point during the visit, Montgomery strangled Stinnett and slashed across her stomach, removing a baby girl, the FBI said.

Less than 24 hours later, thanks to the tracing of past online chats between the women, Montgomery was arrested. The baby, Victoria Jo Stinnett, was recovered safely and taken home by her father days later.

Montgomery was taken to jail.

And the forensic experts got their first look at the alleged culprit.

"It fit the profile," Resnick said.

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Calif. police arrest doctor in art sting

BY SOLOMON MOORE
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — The old doctor told his wealthy acquaintances that his treasure trove of paintings and sculptures had been bequeathed to his family by an Indian maharajah and that his late father had left a will stipulating that he could never sell them through art auction houses.

So Vilas Likhite, 66, allegedly proposed selling his collection of paintings by Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, Willem de Kooning and other modern masters directly to wealthy individuals he met in southern California.

The prospective buyers, authorities allege, were businessmen who knew little about art. The doctor appeared to have possessed

Authorities say man sold phony Pollock, de Kooning, Cassatt paintings

meticulous documentation: A sculpture by the Romanian artist Constantin Brancusi was appraised at \$26 million. A painting by the American impressionist Mary Cassatt was on offer for \$800,000.

But Los Angeles police detectives said Monday the artworks were fakes.

Tipped off by suspicious would-be buyers, detectives posing as a Korean businessman and an interpreter lured Likhite to an upscale hotel in downtown Los Angeles last week. They purchased the Cassatt painting before arresting him on suspicion of grand theft.

Investigators said the doctor came to the hotel with a dozen pieces of what he said were high-priced artwork. Detectives determined all were fakes.

Orange County sheriff's authorities were also seeking to question him about a fake de Kooning painting Likhite reported stolen last year.

Likhite was being held in police custody in lieu of \$250,000 bail.

The Mission Viejo hematologist could not be reached for comment Monday.

Police were still trying to determine the source of the counterfeit artworks and said they were following leads in Denver, Boston and Australia.

Detectives were also tracking the elaborate paper trail of certificates of authenticity, appraisals and receipts Likhite allegedly concocted to pass off his counterfeits as originals.

Detective Don Hrycyk, of the Los Angeles Police Department's art theft detail, said none of the artwork appeared to be copies, but were original works done in the style of the masters.

It's not the first time Likhite has been tied to forged artwork.

In 1989, when he was a physician in Massachusetts, he was accused by police of selling two fake pieces to an investment banker and a fellow physician. He denied the charges. Authorities there said

Likhite told the men that the paintings came from estates and other collections.

Hrycyk said Likhite was convicted of the crime and sentenced to probation.

Los Angeles police officials said they became aware of Likhite a few weeks ago from two businessmen who said the doctor had approached them. Likhite, they said, asked them to work as brokers to sell part of his art collection by helping him find wealthy buyers.

Christmas lights Web site was hoax

BY COLLEEN SLEVIN
The Associated Press

DENVER — A man who boasted to reporters around the world that his Web site allowed strangers to turn his outdoor Christmas lights off and on admitted it was an elaborate hoax designed, he said, to spread holiday cheer.

Alek Komarnitsky, a computer specialist, said he started the site two years ago to see if he could use computer tricks to make it look as if the thousands of lights adorning his house in Lafayette were blinking on command.

This year, he went even further: At one point, with a TV station helicopter hovering overhead, his wife was inside, turning the lights off and on herself.

The Web site was featured in numerous holiday stories, including one by The Associated Press and Komarnitsky said he decided to announce his scam to The Wall Street Journal because it had gotten "a little out of hand."

"For the overwhelming majority of people who read about this, it will continue to provide a little Christmas chuckle," Komarnitsky said after the Journal posted a story on its Web site Monday.

On his site, Komarnitsky explained how he used a series of still photographs of his house from three angles — with the lights either on or off, and with varying amounts of snow on the ground.

"To make it seem even more real, he would sometimes add an image of a person or a car driving by in the Web cam shot" looking at the lights.

While people may have believed they were controlling the lights, all they actually saw were the prepared photos — nothing was actually happening at the house.

When one television reporter came to view how the display worked, Komarnitsky said he responded that the Web cam was broken and he was waiting for a part to be delivered.

The AP picked up the story from a local newspaper and checked out the Web site but never visited the house.

Komarnitsky said some of his neighbors, who were quoted in news stories, were in on the scam. One allowed him to put a camera in a tree across the street.

"He put an extension cord that didn't go anywhere," said Marjorie Hargrave, whose tree supported the camera.

Komarnitsky said he's received more than a thousand e-mails from appreciative visitors to the site.

In one, posted on his Web site Dec. 4, Komarnitsky gave advice to a woman who said her grandson had told a lie and was worried what he would get from Santa Claus. He responded: "One thing I tell my two boys (and elves) is to ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH."

Komarnitsky made money from advertisements posted on the site.

He said it amounted to only "pennies" for each hit on the ads. He said he couldn't disclose the amount because of a deal with Google.

Paul McLellan, general manager of Minneapolis-based ServiceLighter.com, which had an ad on the site, said Komarnitsky's actions were unethical.

"Finding out he's making a buck off of something that costs us a buck, it's not very cool," McLellan said.

A spokesman for Google declined comment until officials could look into the matter further.

Classic film registry expanded

BY LAURA MECKLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Films teaching Cold War children to "duck and cover" and describing how Oskar Schindler saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust are being added to the National Film Registry.

Also being preserved: Elvis Presley, Bruce Lee and Jerry Lewis. They are among 25 films selected by the Library of Congress to the registry, which now holds 400 pictures.

Also on this year's list: movies starring Popeye the Sailor Man, Orson Welles, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

Librarian of Congress James H. Billington made the selections after evaluating nearly 1,000 titles nominated by the public and consulting staff and advisers, the library said.

"The films we choose are not necessarily the 'best' American films ever made or the most famous," Billington said in a statement. Rather, they are chosen because they have "cultural, historical or aesthetic significance."

A film's selection recognizes its place in American film and cultural history, he said.

"The registry stands among the finest summations of American cinema's wondrous film century."

This year's selections span a wide cinematic range and include both obscure and well-known movies. Among the better-known films:

■ "Ben Hur," the 1959 epic starring Charlton Heston, which tells the story of a Jewish prince who is betrayed and sent into slavery by a Roman friend, and to regain his freedom and come back for revenge.

Its centerpiece: an action-packed chariot race.

■ "Duck and Cover," the 1951 landmark civil defense film seen by millions of schoolchildren in the 1950s. In the case of an atomic attack, children were advised to duck beneath a table or desk and cover their heads.

■ "Jailhouse Rock," which showcased Elvis Presley in ultimate rebel mode. The edge in this 1957 film was toned down in later Presley pictures.

■ "Enter the Dragon," 1973, a U.S.-Hong Kong co-production that was the last film completed by Bruce Lee and is considered one of the most influential martial-arts films ever made.

■ "The Nutty Professor," the 1963 film which some rank as comic Jerry Lewis' greatest.

■ "Schindler's List," the 1993 film based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, a factory owner in Nazi-occupied Poland who employed hundreds of Jewish workers and saved them from the Holocaust. Lesser-known films on this year's list include "Daughters of the Dust,"



Elvis Presley's movie "Jailhouse Rock" is one of 25 movies selected to be added to the National Film Registry as representative of American culture.

the first feature-length film by a black woman to receive a wide theatrical release, and "Empire," Andy Warhol's eight-hour, one-shot stationary camera look at the Empire State Building.

The registry was established by Congress in the 1988 National Film Preservation Act, and each year 25 movies are added. The Library of Congress works to ensure that each film in the registry is preserved for all time.

"OffOn" (1968)

"Popeye the Sailor Meets Sinbad the Sailor" (1936)

"Pups is Pups (Our Gang)" (1930)

"Schindler's List" (1993)

"Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" (1954)

"Swing Time" (1936)

"There It Is" (1928)

"Unforgiven" (1992)

— The Associated Press

The chosen few

The 25 films selected this year to join the Library of Congress' National Film Registry are the year in which they premiered:

"Ben Hur" (1959)

"The Blue Bird" (1918)

"A Bronx Morning" (1931)

"Cash of the Wolves" (1925)

"The Court Jester" (1956)

"D.O.A." (1950)

"Daughters of the Dust" (1991)

"Duck and Cover" (1951)

"Empire" (1964)

"Enter the Dragon" (1973)

"Enter the Void" (1978)

"Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers" (1980)

"Going My Way" (1944)

"Jailhouse Rock" (1957)

"Kannapolis" (N.C.) (1941)

"Lady Helen's Escape" (1909)

"The Nutty Professor" (1963)

FACES

Leoni gives zesty performance in 'Spanglish'

BY WILLIAM BOOTH

The Washington Post

Were cooling our jets at the hotel bar, awaiting Tea Leoni, who is upstairs taking her clothes off.

That's what the publicist says. Tea is changing. We drum our fingers, order a glass of sauvignon blanc, flip through notes.

Tea Leoni was born Elizabeth Te Pantaleoni in 1966. Raised New York City. Daughter of a mergers and acquisitions lawyer. Park Avenue. Sarah Lawrence College. Majored in anthropology.

Dropped out, bummed around the Virgin Islands. First big break: winning an audition for a remake of the "Charlie's Angels" television series, which never got made.

We're deep into reading about her 7-iron (Golf for Women magazine) when Tea (pronounced TAY-uh) Leoni appears, wrapped in a short overcoat with an oversize silk flower on the lapel, lugging a handbag, blowing her blond hair off her face.

Even a little frazzled after a day being interviewed by the Hollywood Foreign Press corps, the woman glows like warm butter, as if lit by some incredibly high-end designer light bulb.

Hard day at the office? "Don't start with me, buster," Leoni says.

She is kind of snappy, in that 1940s Hollywood way, a blond siren who'll smoke the occasional cigar, knock back a tequila. She swears like a sailor. She is known to belch.

She flops in the chair, scans the table, waves to the hovering waiter. "We're having wine? Great idea. I'll have whatever he's having."

We begin our opening inquiries. "Shhhh, shhhh, shhhh." Leoni wags a finger. "Just a minute." Grab. Flip. Phone. She cradles the mini-cell. "Gotta check in with the family first." That would be husband David Duchovny, formerly of "The X-Files," and daughter West, son Miller. A moment of personal phone talk. More button punching. Voice mail. Then: "OK, shoot."

Leoni is starting in writer-director James L. Brooks' new domestic comedy-drama, "Spanglish." What is the movie about? Whew! Marriage.

Kids. Longing. The travails of a stunning and headstrong young Mexican maid and mother (Spanish actress Paz Vega as Flor) and her bright-as-a-new-penny daughter, who enter the lives of a wealthy Westside Los Angeles family, the dysfunctional Claskys, led by Adam Sandler (playing it straight) as the sweet, decent hub-dad who is a renowned chef, and his on-screen wife, Leoni, who is a train wreck.

Deborah Clasky, as channeled by Leoni, is self-obsessed and oblivious; she buys her plump, size 10 daughter size 8 clothes so she'll lose weight. Deborah is vanity, she is vulnerability. The character carries SPF 70 sunblock. She does yoga. But enlightenment eludes her.

When Deb has sex with Sandler's character, John, she pretty much takes care of Deb, if you know what we mean. Deb is very good at shopping; she nests, furiously, she jogs, aggressively. It is all about Deborah. She is a screaming-me-me.

Q: Your character is appalling.

A: Completely.

Q: But she's real. I mean, this town is filled with Deborahs.

A: They're everywhere.

Q: She's having a meltdown.

A: I think she's bipolar.

Q: But she's hilarious.



Attract Tea Leoni arrives at the premiere of "Spanglish" on Dec. 9. Leoni's character is self-serving and almost ugly, but Leoni says she relishes such juicy roles.

A: Go for it.

Q: I mean, what are we to make of Deborah?

Leoni takes a sip of white wine. "There's something about being conscious," she says. "Deborah is not conscious. She is so blinded by her self-worry, her grandiose narcissism. I don't think Deborah thinks, I'm not loving. I'm not a good mother. But she made what should be the joy in life the pain in life, you know?"

When she was making "Jurassic Park III," back in 2001,

you have to start accepting yourself as you are," she explains, adding that despite her low self-esteem and weight problems, Ozzy always "loved me the way I was."

Puck caters to stars

Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck will cook up a storm at the Oscars next year, after signing on to cater the star-studded official Academy Awards banquet for the 11th time, reports Agence France-Presse.

Oscar organizers said the Austrian-born

Leoni took her daughter to the set. "We spent months running around the jungle fleeing imaginary dinosaurs," she says. But Leoni didn't want her daughter, now 5, to see her playing Mrs. Clasky. Deborah is very funny, but Deborah does not know she is funny. Because she is also scary, because she is unlitiged.

"But I relate to her as a mother. The earnestness. As a mother, I get it: needing so badly to do it right. I don't see the world as a terrifying place. But Deborah does. And if her daughter has the extra pounds, she won't be able to fight. She'll be eaten alive."

To the world, Leoni is a sexy, blond, blue-eyed uber-WASP, with mile-long legs, an actress known sometimes as much for her beauty as her work. She did the TV series "The Naked Truth," and has appeared in "Bad Boys" with Will Smith and "The Family Man" with Nicolas Cage and "Deep Impact," the blockbuster about a meteor. Plus the dinosaur sequel.

We actually think she was best in David O. Russell's quirky Ben Stiller movie, "Flirting With Disaster," where Leoni got to play comedy.

"I've been here 13 years. Wait. Longer. 1988. Jesus, it's been 17 years," she says. "For a while there, people would say, 'Why don't you become a bigger star?' She makes a funny face. "Hm. Why don't I become a bigger star?"

The Hollywood dream, we offer, playing the unctuous undertaker.

"Yeah, pffft! Like really dumb," Leoni says. "I don't regret a move I've made in this town. I've worked with some phenomenal talent. I've done some projects that were very sought after, with reason. One way or the other — they were either going to be big or they were just damn good."

A cruising waiter. Leoni: "Excuse me, could we have a couple more glasses of wine?" We glug.

"But it didn't happen for me that way," she says, "and it couldn't have. I can't rest my laurels on a face or a body, or be the girl who shows up at fashion shows and premieres. I've never been that for any one. It's not what I do."

She says, "I mean, give me a banana peel!" to slip on. Which is exactly what Brooks has given her.

Sandler plays a romantic lead. Vega plays his love interest and is, as Sandler's character confesses, "drop-dead crazy gorgeous." And Leoni?

"Someonebody said to me: 'What a brave performance to be seen like that.' Meaning a little puffy? A little!'" Leoni snarles a laugh. "You're killing me. Anyway."

It's [expletive] bawling your eyes out and a director who has the bravery to say, 'don't you dare touch her up. I mean, to be shown looking so horrible on camera? I couldn't have done it without that.'"

In a climactic scene, Leoni's nose starts running while she's crying, which her co-star, the marvelous Cloris Leachman (playing Deborah's boozy-but-wise mother), suggests she does not wipe away, saying something like, "It makes you real, honey." Before Deborah confronts Sandler about his possible infidelity.

So, you're puffy-eyed, runny nose. Brooks lights you like you were under fluorescent lights. I mean, your pores, visible. Then he switches to Paz, who is young, luminous, radiant, the girl everybody wants.

So it's like a torch being passed? Leoni says, OK, I see where this is going. She is 38, the mother of two. Striking, but no longer 21. "God bless the girls who become icons in this town. I can't imagine a more scary pedestal to fall from. I suppose in some very lonely moments in my life, I'd wish for that."

To fall? To rise, she says. "I'm not some so-and-so taking off their makeup to do their non-makeup movie. I'm a character actor."

So this idea of being totally exposed, "this is what I want to do."

Osbourne bares all

We've been there for many of Sharon Osbourne's most intimate moments, from her battle with colon cancer to her explosive-filled heart-to-hearts with her children to her creepy baby-talk with husband Ozzy. But it turns out the publicity-loving, soul-baring MTV matron still has some secrets left to spill, reports MSN.com.

First up: her continuing struggle with bulimia. "I still have it," she admits. "Ozzy knows, yes. And the kids. My God, how

could they not! It's the thing that causes most arguments. We'll be at the dinner table, and I'll go off and they'll say: 'Oh, here we go again.' They hate it."

Moving on to the next revelation — her extensive nipping and tucking. "Face lift, neck, breasts. Lips, leg lifts, bum implant, tummy tuck. I've had it all and it is fab-u-lous," enthuses Osbourne, who has said the various surgeries set her back about \$250,000.

"I've had so much plastic surgery, but there is only so much you can do — then

you have to start accepting yourself as you are," she explains, adding that despite her low self-esteem and weight problems, Ozzy always "loved me the way I was."

super-chef, long a favorite of the stars who regularly cluster in his Hollywood restaurant, had again been selected for the glittering Governor's Ball.

The Ball is held immediately after the annual Academy Awards to honor all the evening's winners and nominees.

"This is Hollywood's biggest night, so it's great to have the opportunity each year to create a menu that is new and exciting," said Puck.

From The Associated Press

7 stabbed at party

OH AKRON — Seven people were stabbed in a fight at a birthday party for a 2-year-old girl, and police said they charged two men with assault.

The little girl was not hurt, police said.

The victims of the melee were hospitalized and at least one victim required surgery, said police Sgt. Terry Hudnall.

Tam T. Nguyen, 25, and Vi Tran, 35, were charged. Nguyen was jailed and Tran was being treated at a hospital for injuries he suffered in the fight, Hudnall said. He said he anticipated more charges would be filed.

Police called to the party said they found men and women with severe knife wounds, some of them possibly life threatening.

Lottery winnings disputed

RI CRANSTON — The state Lottery Commission has been added to a lawsuit that claims prize money should have been withheld from a man who owes child support.

Cranston's Paula Duffy is owed about \$40,000 in child support.

She originally filed suit against Lincoln Park and amended the complaint to also include the Lottery Commission as a defendant.

Duffy claims Frank Bianco, the father of her son, won at least \$3,000 on Sept. 12 at Lincoln Park and more on other occasions.

The lawsuit seeks to have Lincoln Park or the Lottery Commission pay Duffy the \$40,000 she's owed for child support.

Abortion doctor arrested

FL MIRAMAR — A doctor whose license was revoked for botching abortions, including leaving fetus parts inside a patient, was arrested on charges he continued to perform the procedures.

Roberto A. Osborne, 44, turned himself in to police and was released on bond. He was charged with performing medicine without a license, a third-degree felony. His medical license was revoked in August after state regulators determined he failed to perform necessary preoperative procedures, did not treat a severe uterine perforation and did not return calls to his emergency phone line.

Wanted: snow

WY JACKSON — Pray for snow.

It may sound lighthearted, but Jackson Hole congregations have been doing just that — and the Rev. David Bott of Redeemer Lutheran Church points to some very white results a couple weeks ago.

"But now they're wondering if it's beginner's luck," he said.

Little snow has fallen in the valley over the past two weeks, prompting resorts like Snow King to crank up their snowmaking machinery to keep the slopes well-dressed.

Paul Hayden, minister at Presbyterian Church of Jackson Hole, said he has been praying fervently for precipitation.

"Theologically, we're called to be stewards of the earth, and this is a real stewardship issue," he said. "It's not just a fun issue."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Grinches foiled

MS COLUMBUS — It wasn't tough for police to thwart two would-be Grinches — they just followed the telltale trail of wrapping paper.

Two unidentified boys, ages 14 and 12, were charged with burglary after they were accused of stealing Christmas presents from a family home, police said.

Authorities say Stanley Adams discovered someone had broken into his Columbus home late Friday. Two juveniles who lived nearby were suspected.

Police followed a trail of paper, ribbons and gift tags that led them to one of the boys' houses. One boy told authorities that he stole the presents. The gifts — which included an E-Z Bake oven, a set of Legos and a Pac-Man video game — were returned.

One inmate's charity

HI HONOLULU — The state Supreme Court has suspended state Rep. Alex Sonson from practicing law for three months because of numerous ethics violations from 1999 to 2002, officials announced Monday.

In a statement released late Monday, Sonson said he takes full responsibility for his actions and will cooperate fully with the decision.



Real horsepower

Tim Tong rides a horse into downtown Juneau, Alaska, from the Mendenhall Valley. Tong is a horse trainer who moved to Juneau to work and be with his family after leaving the Air Force, in which he served in Iraq.

The court's Office of Disciplinary Counsel said Sonson misappropriated a client's money, commingled personal funds with other money, mislabeled his trust and business accounts and falsely submitted documents stating he was in compliance with state rules of conduct. His suspension begins Jan. 19.

"I would also like to apologize to my clients and to my constituents for these errors," said Sonson, D-Pearl City-Waipahu, who won re-election to his second term in office last month.

"I want to assure them that it will not happen again."

One person's trash ...

OR EUGENE — Turns out there's quite a collector's market for 100-year-old glass electric insulators.

One such item, purchased for peanuts at a garage sale, netted \$10,313 on eBay recently. It's not diamond-encrusted, it wasn't owned by a celebrity and there's no vision of the Virgin Mary involved here.

Phil Urnine and Jeanie Quimby came up with two of the insulators, one ceramic, one glass, for \$5 for the pair.

Quimby thought she could make a buck — posting the glass model with a starting price of \$5.99.

Just a few hours later, she checked to see how it was doing — and found 10 urgent messages from collectors, telling her that the glass insulator dated to the 1890s, was extraordinarily rare and listed in price guides at up to \$10,000.

"I about freaked out," said Quimby, 55.

"I couldn't talk."

The winning bid of \$10,313 came from a man in Helena, Mont.

"This particular piece, I would guess that there are fewer than 12 of them that have been found to date," said John McDougall of Sedona, Ariz., who has published insulator price guides and reference books.

Belted the kids in

NH EXETER — A regional school board that represents six area towns is considering seat belts on school buses. If the policy is adopted, it would represent a first among the state's public schools. The board is reviewing the board after several parents sought seat belts.

"We teach our children from day one to buckle up," Jaye Jennings Garnett said. "And then we put them on a school bus without one?"

Once the cost is known, the board plans to put the issue before voters.

Questionable finances

FL TALLAHASSEE — Florida could award a \$700 million private contract despite a lack of evidence that it will save more money than keeping the work within a state agency, according to a group that evaluated the options. The contract would cover those who decide residents' eligibility for food stamps, welfare assistance and Medicaid.

Taxpayers are expected to save \$69.2 million a year under both the outsourced and in-house models.



Worshippers sing "Silent Night" during a candlelight service at the First Presbyterian Church in Dodge City, Kan.



An understatement

Ice forms on a street sign in Coldstream in Danville, Ky.



Not where the water belongs Marvin Tyner, office manager of a water bottling company in Augusta, Ga., sweeps water off the roof of the business.



Christmas helper This 2-year-old, 145-pound St. Bernard named Harrison shows his Christmas spirit as he waits in the truck of his owner, Randy Davis, while running errands recently in Ottumwa, Iowa.



Moon climber? A construction worker appears to be climbing to the moon as he makes his way up a form 60 feet above the ground at a construction site in Daytona Beach, Fla.



Holiday deliveries Newborns from left, Karen Granados, 4 days old; Kennedy Mae O'Neill, 3 days old; Diego Novoa, 1 day old; Victoria Irizarry, 1 day old; Luke Harrison Insana, 3 days old; Spencer Bennett Kerr, 1 day old; and Trinity Belle Analambidakis, 4 days old, pose for a photo at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Mass.

Flip-flop on the rails

MO KANSAS CITY — Plans to create a rail museum at historic Union Station by early next year have been pared down. Six months ago, Union Station's board voted to pay a Milwaukee collector \$650,000 for 11 antique rail cars and a collection of railroad memorabilia. Now the station seeks to fix five of the rail cars for tours at the museum and sell the others.

Museum work begins

VA FREDERICKSBURG — Work crews began clearing land for construction of the U.S. National Slavery Museum.

Scores of trees were removed from the 38-acre site near Interstate 95. Eight to nine acres need to be cleared as the first step in building the museum.

Museum officials have said the facility will open in February 2007.

The founder of the museum is former Gov. L. Douglas Wilder. The grandson of slaves and the nation's first elected black governor, Wilder has said the idea was born during his visit to Goree Island in West Africa.

Plane crash kills 2

WI HOWARDS GROVE — A single-engine plane whose pilot reported smoke in the cockpit crashed in a hayfield, killing both people on board, officials said.

Witnesses told investigators the plane's engine was not running when it struck some treetops, flipped and crashed on its back in eastern Wisconsin near Lake Michigan, sheriff's Sgt. Doug Tuttle said.

The pilot of the 1964 Beech Bonanza took off from Manitowish, about 20 miles north of the crash site, and was heading to Lockport in northern Illinois, said Tony Molinaro, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

Big shoes to fill

PA PHILADELPHIA — The city's managing director, who oversees 13 agencies and runs the city government's day-to-day affairs, said he will leave his job by early spring. "I'm going to be 60 in April, and it's a tough job for a 60-year-old, and I've got a life to live," Philip Goldsmith said. The managing director's job is one of several top positions Mayor John Street must fill.

Law change works

LA METAIRIE — Officers have issued a third fewer speeding tickets on the bridge across Lake Pontchartrain since October, when the speed limit was raised from 55 mph to 65 mph. Officials with the Causeway Commission, which oversees the bridge, said more motorists are obeying the new limits. About 900 speeders were caught in August; 595 were ticketed in November.

Accused coach dead

CO CASTLE ROCK — A girls basketball coach charged with having sex with three of his underage players was found dead in his jail cell of an apparent suicide.

Rick Lopez, 37, former coach of the Colorado Hoopsters, was discovered hanging Sunday in a cell

he had to himself at the Douglas County Detention Facility, police said. A note was found nearby, but officials would not discuss its contents.

Lopez was charged in August with 59 counts of sexual assault and child abuse. He had an arraignment hearing scheduled for Feb. 11.

Prosecutors said Lopez admitted having sexual relationships with three former players in the traveling girls basketball club, beginning when they were 13 or 14 years old. Other players have also accused him of making sexual advances toward them.

Shipping port study

MI ESCANABA — Few physical barriers would prevent the creation of a deep-water Lake Michigan shipping port, a recent study found. The study shows infrastructure requirements such as railways, utilities and electricity are all in place to accommodate a deep-water port in Escanaba. Two companies interested in investing in the project have submitted proposals to the city.

Gay cops settle

CA LOS ANGELES — The city has tentatively agreed to pay \$650,000 to settle lawsuits filed by two gay police officers who claim they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. If ratified by the City Council, the settlements would boost to nearly \$3 million the city's payouts to eight gay officers.

School funds needed

MT HELENA — Half of the voters questioned in a statewide poll say Montana's public schools lack money to provide a quality education. The poll found most voters want to fill the gap by cutting other government spending and not by raising taxes. The telephone poll commissioned by Lee Newspapers of Montana surveyed 625 registered voters statewide. School funding is likely to be the top issue in the upcoming legislative session.

Threat lands man in jail

TX EL PASO — A man who pleaded guilty to threatening to destroy the El Paso Islamic Center has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison.

In addition, U.S. District Judge Frank Montalvo ordered Jared Bjarnason, 30, to complete 150 hours of community service.

"There are no life threats in the post 9/11 world," U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton said. Bjarnason admitted to sending an e-mail message to the center in April threatening to burn down the center's mosque if hostages held in Iraq were not released within three days.

Interpreting immunity

VT BURLINGTON — Advocates for Vermont's growing number of foreign language interpreters say the workers need legal protection so they won't have to testify in court about their jobs.

Sylvia Delcastillo-Alzamora, a Spanish-English translator, says testifying about her work "would be betraying the ethics of the profession."

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Columnist misses point

Jack Kelly's column "In Kuwait, Rumsfeld didn't let his Guard down" (Dec. 13), misses the point of the troops' complaints completely, and accepts without question administration excuses. On the same day on another page of Stars and Stripes, we read that the provider of up-armored Humvees can actually make 100 more of them a month.

If Kelly was not a partisan hack, he could ask questions like: Why has the Pentagon not contracted with Armor Holdings Inc. to work at full capacity? Is this one company the only one in the United States capable of making M1148s? If we are in a state of war, why has the government not acted like every wartime government in our nation's history and stepped in to coordinate our industries for wartime purposes?

Instead, Kelly argues that the Army is built to "fight the Soviets on the plains of Europe." Anyone who has picked up a newspaper or watched a Pentagon news conference in the last decade knows that this is no longer true. Low-level conflict has been regarded as the "next war" for at least a decade. That is why the Pentagon developed the Striker and fought to kill the Crusader. This is what Donald Rumsfeld's "transformation" was all about.

In a sense Rumsfeld was right when he said that "you go to war with the Army you have." However, the Army we have in Iraq is a result of the failure to plan at the highest levels. Dismissing intelligence reports to the contrary, Rumsfeld committed the Striker and under the impression that Iraqis would welcome their occupiers with flowers and smiles. This is the real reason we were not prepared

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for the insurgency — dismissing diverging views, the Pentagon refused to accept there would be one.

The fact that not everything possible has been done to deal with the shortages (half-efforts to increase production and leaving behind armor when disarming) suggests decision-makers were holding on to the fantasy that the insurgency is a passing phase and always "on its last legs."

This is what the soldiers in Kuwait knew and complained about, and this was the people responsible must answer for.

Marcin Damjan

Bahdad

Poor armored vehicles policy

I would like to address the recent publicity regarding the lack of armored vehicles in Iraq. I have served in Iraq for the last year. When we came in, we drove from Kuwait to Baghdad without a single armored vehicle. We pieced together sheets of metal to provide the best protection possible, but all knew that it would be little good.

My company has seen least weekly convoys between Tajik and Baghdad, and still we have only managed to get a couple of armored trucks to help support those convoys. We have driven enough miles to go back and forth to Kuwait at least 20 times, if not more. During that time, we have been shot at, had roadside bombs go off on us and faced every other type of danger. And yet armor was not a major issue.

Now that my year in Iraq is over and I am trying to go home, I am being told that we can't drive to Kuwait because we don't have armored vehicles. I am also told that it will take a while to get enough trucks to line-haul everything south. Don't get me wrong — in the line-haul trucks have saved my butt a few times, but it infuriates me to be told that, after risking my life countless times on the road to attend meetings and other events, I can't risk it one more time to go home and finally be away from danger.

I can understand that soldiers don't want to enter Iraq without armor. They are right; it's dangerous. But ask anyone who has been here for a while, and none of them will complain. We have done our time and faced our danger. Don't hold up more troops from going home just because a soldier wants to complain about a shortage of armor that has existed here for two years. Stop your whining and do your job.

Sgt. Troy Croy

Camp Cooke, Iraq

Avoid homeland security 'empty shell'

Washington Post
However President Bush chooses as his next nominee to head the Department of Homeland Security would be well-advised to take a look at a spine-tingling new chart before accepting the job. The chart — too large to reprint here but available for viewing at www.hsc.house.gov — depicts the intricate web of congressional committees and subcommittees with oversight authority for the gargantuan department.

There are 79 such panels; every single senator and at least 412 of the 435 House members have some degree of responsibility for homeland security operations. By contrast, the Defense Department, a budget of \$200 billion, has just 36 committees and subcommittees.

From the perspective of national security, this fragmented, dysfunctional structure is sheer lunacy. Department officials spend too much time responding to their many congressional masters' last year alone, accord-

ing to the departing secretary, Tom Ridge, and other top department officials testified 145 times before various committees and subcommittees. Moreover, such balkanized oversight is less effective rather than more so, because members of Congress suffer from parochial viewpoints influenced by their individual committee assignments and fail to develop a broad overview of homeland security priorities.

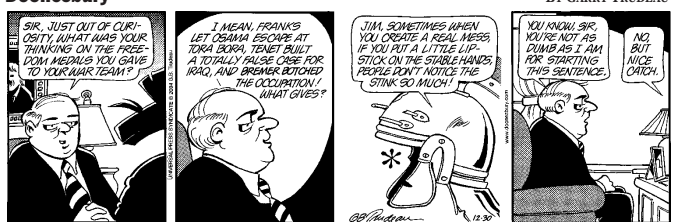
The point of creating the department out of the existing bureaucracy was to improve the ability to coordinate responses to terrorism. Yet turf is power, and lawmakers ... have been unwilling to make parallel changes in their own organization. ...

The House of Representatives has a chance to fix this mess — at least its end of it — but it's facing opposition to meaningful change from committee chairmen who don't want to yield any slice of their jurisdiction. The Senate has already done a fig-leaf version of reform, renaming the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee to put "Home-

land Security" at the top of its title, but leaving responsibility for congressional security issues such as border control and aviation security in other committees. In the House, members will vote next week on a plan to make permanent the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, as Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., has advocated. What's still being furiously negotiated is whether to give the panel the power it has lacked over issues including maritime security, transportation security and immigration enforcement — in other words, to make it a fully functional homeland security committee. ...

It would be worse than an empty shell to have a homeland security committee with jurisdiction that's shared with everyone else," says the committee's chairman, Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Ind. "I would therefore his colleagues, he says, is simple: "Is this a political exercise to make chairman happy, or is this a historic opportunity to fundamentally reshape the committee structure to address homeland security?"

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Stars and Stripes (USPS 418-0100) is published daily (except Sundays and New Year's Day) for \$9.00 a copy. The newspaper is published by Stars and Stripes, central office, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20045-1301. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, Calif. Postmaster: Send address changes to Stars and Stripes, central office, Unit 45002, APO 96333-5002.

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OPINION

Some Iraqis defy insurgents to seek peace

By FRED HIATT
The Washington Post

Returning to Washington from Baghdad this month for home leave gave A. Heather Coyne a shock. In Iraq, as chief representative of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Coyne spends her days working with that country's emerging civil society. Back home, she finds Americans astonished to hear there is an emerging civil society — that Iraqis remain involved with rebuilding their country despite all the explosions and killings.

No, this is not a "good news" story. To the contrary, Coyne's experience confirms the deterioration of conditions in Iraq. She is confined, for security reasons, to Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone. Her Iraqi colleagues for the most part dare not visit her there, because terrorists are always watching those who come and go.

Communication is by phone and e-mail. Recently the institute held a workshop on conflict resolution in Sulaymaniyah, in the relatively peaceful Kurdish north, because the capital is too dangerous. One participant was a Mosul professor who lectures with 10 armed bodyguards in his classroom.

The insurgents, in other words, are succeeding, not only in killing and wounding Iraqis and Americans but in impeding Iraqis' efforts to rebuild their country and to interact with one another and foreigners.

They're blocking precisely the kinds of interaction a society needs to begin recovering from decades of dictatorship. Worse: The violence is exacerbating sectarian tensions, as the insurgents also intend. So far a remark-

able feature of the war has been Kurdish and, especially, Shiite restraint in the face of provocation from Sunni terrorists. But Phebe Marr, a senior fellow at the Institute of Peace who also recently returned from Iraq, says the sectarian-based anger is worse than she's ever seen.

Yet what strikes Coyne is not the bad news — maybe because she's living in the middle of it — but the fortitude and persistence in the face of attacks of the Iraqis she works with. The Mosul professor keeps teaching. One local leader called the day after he had been shot three times — to ask whether the institute had accepted the people he had recommended to take part in a seminar. Another, whose house was torched, got in touch to make sure Coyne had his new telephone number.

"Yes, they complain" about conditions, Coyne said. But she finds a surfeit of Iraqis who still want to learn what the institute has to teach — about how to peacefully manage religious and sectarian conflict, for example — and are willing to drive 11 or 12 hours through multiple dangerous checkpoints to get books and practical advice and lessons from other Iraqis.

To the families of American soldiers who are dying or at risk, there may be little comfort in knowing that Iraqis also are dying and putting themselves at risk. It may help only a bit more to realize that so many of them are committed to making democracy and tolerance work and that their success would be not only the just outcome but in the U.S. national interest, too. Yet the courage of these ordinary Iraqis is extraordinary.

It doesn't mean, of course, that they'll win.



Iraqis Ahmed and Omar, right, check damage done to their neighbor's Baghdad home last week. A mortar had landed the night before, killing one person and injuring another.

The insurgents are testing the will of Americans and Iraqis alike; if U.S. and Iraqi forces cannot provide some measure of safety for election observers and college professors and women's rights campaigners, it won't matter that a majority of Iraqis want the insurgents to fail.

What is remarkable, though, is that despite the mistakes of the U.S. occupation, and despite the ruthlessness and brutality of the terrorists, so many Iraqis continue to stand up on the other side.

Coyne recently interviewed applicants for Fulbright grants, smart Iraqis willing to risk

an association with a U.S. program because they dream of starting an Internet site, or a government watchdog organization, or a public health project. And when they're asked why they take the risk, they invariably answer, "Because it wasn't possible before."

One applicant was a young Kurdish man who graduated at the top of his high school class but, in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, was not permitted to go to university. He is coming forward now, he told Coyne, "because this is my first best chance." She paused and added, "And maybe his last best chance."

Fred Hiatt is editor of The Post's editorial page.

As world advances, Castro off on his own island

By MARCELA SANCHEZ
The Washington Post

My mom arrived early for Christmas this year — three weeks ahead of time, in fact. Her visit is something of a holiday ritual, and while it and the nature of mother-daughter dynamics do elicit some tension in our home, I'm grateful she is here.

I'm even more thankful when I consider how petty my concerns seem in comparison with those of people who cannot be with loved ones this season, separated as they are by distance, commitments and even by the whims of a tyrant.

Hilda Molina was one of Cuba's leading brain surgeons when she turned against the Cuban government in 1995, accusing it of trying to make a business of selling fetal brain tissue to foreigners suffering from Parkinson's disease. Molina resigned her seat in parliament and her membership in the Communist Party in protest. For nearly a decade, she has vainly requested permission to visit her son and his family in Argentina, which has no travel restrictions to and from Cuba.

Gloria Amaya is the mother of Miguel, Ariel and Guido Sigler Amaya, three of the now-famous 75 peaceful pro-democracy activists whose arrest and sentencing 20 months ago by the Castro government provoked the ire of the world. The brothers were charged with undermining "the Cuban socio-political project" by running an independent medical facility out of one of their homes. Because they dared treat the poor of a small town in Cuba with drugs manufactured in the United States, Fidel Castro keeps them in jail and their families apart.

There has been no lack of international solidarity shown to these like the Molina and Amaya families. And both the hard-line and what is sometimes called soft diplomatic strategies employed by the international

community have elicited responses from Fidel Castro — but not the kind that have significantly mitigated the plight of Cuban dissidents.

Antoine President Nestor Kirchner would like to believe that a policy of engagement is the way to soften Castro. Early this year, when the United Nations voted to censure Castro for his dreadful human rights record, Argentina abstained.

But when the opportunity came to cash in on the soft approach, Castro did not respond in kind. Despite diplomatic efforts that included a personal letter from Kirchner asking Castro for a simple "humanitarian gesture," to let Molina visit her son and meet her Argentinean grandchildren, Castro refused. According to Molina, an immigration officer told her she couldn't leave Cuba because her "brain is a national patrimony."

Washington rejects soft diplomacy, of course. Those who attempt to engage Castro

run the risk of "humiliating themselves" or appearing "complicit" in Castro's abusive regime, said Roger Noriega, assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere.

If the State Department thought there was a remote chance for a compromise, a U.S. official said last week, it would try it. But Castro leaves the Bush administration no option but the hard line. The result is a virtual stalemate that has put Washington in the unfortunate position of keeping or strengthening harsh policies — including new travel restrictions to the island that also keep families apart this holiday season.

Tragically, this is the nature of policy with a tyrant. Unable to deal substantively with Castro, foreign leaders are constantly pushed to the fringes, so far away from any truly effective interaction or policy-making that what does occur borders on absurdity.

Most recently, Washington and Havana have been engaged in a battle over Christ-

mas lights. The head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, James Cason, has decked the grounds with a flashy display that includes a snowman, a Santa Claus and a huge number 75, a not-so-subtle reminder of the most recent victims of Castro's repression. Castro retaliated by placing billboards near the Interests Section with images of Abu Ghraib, swastikas and a "Made in the USA" sign.

In the most absurd of outcomes, Argentina opted not to recall its ambassador to Cuba for consultations on the best way to repudiate Castro's inflexibility over Molina. Instead, Kirchner fired the ambassador and the foreign minister's chief of staff.

Molina, Amaya and their loved ones are pawns in a game that Castro has had more than four decades to master. Their stories and the stories of those who intend to help them remind us that there remains within our midst a type of injustice we seem impatient to confront.

Mallard Fillmore

By BRUCE TINSLEY



Hillary:
"I RESOLVE
TO SUPPRESS
MY
ELATION..."



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Horoscope

Mars and Uranus are having a parent-teacher conference, and they're clearly not on the same page when it comes to how we humans should be properly disciplined. And we to learn from our mistakes, or is it better if we avoid the mistakes altogether? Both routes will be tempting. One thing is certain: The lesson is learned either way.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 30)

You know your place in the world this year — go to it! This writer, your companion and generosity will be rewarded by a sweet, transformative love. Spring is reflective, and by May, you'll emerge from your cocoon to accept the applause that is due you. Your year ends on a surprising note — maybe a trip abroad? Love signs are Aries and Cancer.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

An end-of-the-year rebellion is featured. Do what you must to get it out of your system. You're the one who must deliver an important message. Out to the quick so everyone can move on the info as quickly as possible.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Use said it best: Some days slip through your fingers and onto the floor. Forget about tackling your in-box today, unless you can get to it before the rooster crows. Goofing off is the order of the day.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

You've got the holiday spirit. Gregarious and outgoing, you schmooze with the best of 'em at whatever gathering you attend — and there are choices! Cozy up to a VIP, and pith your latest idea.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Be kind to yourself, little crab. You are susceptible to bouts of bluesness this time of year, when the sun is in the sign opposite your own. Don't push too hard. Gather your strength. Your time is coming.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Finances are looking up. Delays and restrictions have been the norm for the past few weeks, but those checks

you've been expecting finally come in. A tardy holiday gift can find its way to your doorstep, too.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Lately, you've been the victim of a slowly accumulating sluggishness, and now is your chance to succumb to it. Be mellow and aimless — it works for you. You'll have terrific luck wandering the mall and the end-of-the-year sales.

Holiday Mathis



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Yesterday's pleasant vibe continues, making you cheerful, sociable and not very likely to get a whole lot of work done. If you must go into the office today, make use of your time by clearing out your desk.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You glean insight into what lesson it is you most need to learn in this lifetime. Hint: It has something to do with your parents. Psychic vibes are hot, too. Divination techniques like I Ching or tarot can help narrow your focus.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your brilliance sparkles like congratulatory champagne. Pat yourself on the back, and take time before the new year to reflect on all that has changed in your life in the past 12 months. Enjoy the view from the top.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

It doesn't matter right now if you don't know exactly where you're headed, as long as you keep moving in the right direction. Signs are everywhere, lighting your path like fireflies in the dark. Look for them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Anger is healthy when you channel it constructively. Search the Internet for a new job, e-mail your congressman, hit the gym, or burn a compilation CD for the person you'd like to kiss on New Year's Eve.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

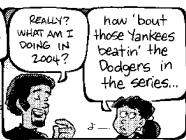
Swimming against the current may be fine for spawning salmon, but why do it if you don't have to? Incredible possibilities arise when you stop struggling. Accept whatever comes your way, and then, take appropriate action.

Creators Syndicate

Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



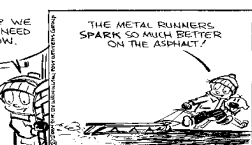
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



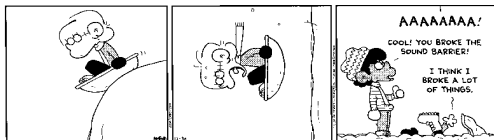
Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Bites



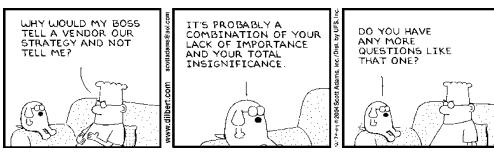
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



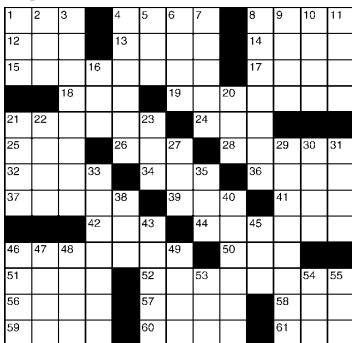
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Helgenberger series
- 4 Palatine Hill site
- 8 Parlor piece
- 12 "2001" computer
- 13 Squared
- 14 2004 hurricane
- 15 INS prey
- 17 Fit in snugly
- 18 "— Yankee ..."
- 19 Raspy-voiced comedy legend
- 21 Spangle
- 24 Pack away
- 25 "Charlie's Angels" actress
- 26 Gripe constantly
- 28 Threesome
- 32 Dry
- 34 Pod denizen
- 36 Farrell co-star
- 37 Olympian's prize
- 39 Central
- 41 Flea hastily
- 42 Peruke
- 44 34-Across, e.g.
- 46 Seinfeld's style
- 50 Clear the tables
- 51 Spheres
- 52 Springfield site
- 56 Missile shelter
- 57 Cole Porter's "Let's—"
- 58 Aussie hopper
- 59 Portent
- 60 Viewfinders
- 61 "Uh-huh"

Down

- 1 Actor
- 2 McBride
- 3 Mule of song
- 3 Not easily cashed in
- 4 Get back
- 5 Eventual ayes
- 6 Pinchle play
- 7 Follow
- 8 Oscar winner as Maggio
- 9 Microwave
- 10 In record time
- 11 Chip in a chip
- 16 Outback bird
- 20 Snitch
- 21 Bridge coup
- 22 Green land
- 23 Entry on Garfield's agenda
- 27 Birthstone, e.g.
- 29 Deceptive
- 30 Leading man
- 31 Edna Everage's title
- 33 Is perceived by
- 35 Have a bug
- 38 Cover
- 40 Shortcomings
- 43 Lead
- 45 Get the motor going
- 46 Mediocre
- 47 Barbershop request
- 48 Skilled
- 49 Tactic
- 53 Try/cue of U.N. fame
- 54 Chit
- 55 Bribe

Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	G	G	R	A	I	N	C	L	I	O
L	O	O	E	C	R	U	R	E	A	D
S	A	N	C	H	A	M	P	A	G	N
A	L	G	A	E	B	E	V			
		S	I	B	S	W	A	H	O	O
B	A	C	K	P	A	I	N	T	I	V
I	D	A	T	I	M	E	S	F	E	Z
A	I	R	Y	T	O	M	P	A	I	N
S	T	R	A	P		N	O	I	R	
		W	E	B		D	E	B	R	A
J	O	H	N	P	A	Y	N	E	R	
A	L	O	E	B	E	E	R	I	L	L
W	E	E	D		A	N	T	S	G	E

12-30

CRYPTOQUIP

RESH QA GAX DSZZ LAXM
XPZXDJG LVZZARF REA
ESKKVP XKAP CXODJFSPQ?

CXSHHMA FOPJA!
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I RAISE SOME ALCOHOL UP OVER MY HEAD, HAVE I SUCCESSFULLY LIFTED MY SPIRITS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals Q

THURSDAY EVENING / DECEMBER 30, 2004

MOVIES

• SPORTS

J	6PM	6:30	7PM	7:30	8PM	8:30	9PM	9:30	10PM	10:30	11PM	11:30
6 AFN-P	•ESPN News Pacific Report	Two and a Half Men Charles Glatfelter (CC)	Will & Grace Invites Jack to a class. (CC)	Barbara Walters Presents the 10 Most Fascinating People of 2004 (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 'X' A female inmate is found dead and tied to a prison bus. (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 'X' A female inmate is found dead and tied to a prison bus. (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 'X' A female inmate is found dead and tied to a prison bus. (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 'X' A female inmate is found dead and tied to a prison bus. (CC)	Pacific Report	The Tonight Show (CC)	Late Show (CC)	
7 AFN-AT	(5:46) Oprah Winfrey (CC)	(3:55) Guiding Light (CC)	(1:17) General Hospital (CC)	Headline News Judge Judy (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)	Today (CC)
8 NEWS	Barbieri with Chris Matthews	The O'Reilly Factor (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)	60 Minutes (CC)
9 SPORTS	(5:00) College Basketball Alabama Wisconsin (Taped)	•SportsCenter	•NFL Live	•NBA Fastbreak	•ESPN News	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.	•Auto Racing FIA World Rally - Turkey Rally. From Analyst.
10 SPECT	The Simpsons Marge goes to space. (CC)	Everybody Loves Raymond Play from PMS.	Summerland "Skipping School" Ava finds Nikki may be better off bypassing her last year of junior high. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)	The Practice "Character Evidence" Jimmy defends his high-school crush in a suspicious homicide case. (CC)
AFN-FL	SpongeBob Squidward Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That	Rugrats Kwanza to "So's Rovent" All That
AFM	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)	En Vogue "The Heart of Me" (2002, Green)
14 TM	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)	William B. Davis Premiere. A woman has an affair with her sister's husband. R (CC)
24 PBS	Dragon Tales Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.	Zoe and Wheezy argue nonstop.
25 SHOW	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)	••• "Breeding for Violence" (2000, Documentary) Filmmaker Michael Moore examines gun culture in America. R (CC)
27 A&E	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".	City of Cincinnati "Panicia City, FL: A Trophy of a Marriage" Scandal rocks Florida's "Redneck Riviera".
28 DISC	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	To Be Announced
29 TFC	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Guest
30 CNN+	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News
31 GOLF	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights	•Deutschbahn Open Highlights Tiger Woods tees the 2002 final	•U.S. Open Golf Highlights
32 TLC	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)	Clean Sweep A man and wife play computers and a huge shoe collection need help. (CC)
33 TOON	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory
34 ANPL	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)	The Crocodile Hunter Steve searches for some of Africa's most poisonous snakes. (CC)
35 COM	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)	Shorties Watchin' Shorties Told 'em they're in. (CC)
40 NCA-	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)	Riddies of the Dead "Skeletal Rage" Skeletal found in frozen Riddies. (CC)
42 FOX	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)	Remington Steele Let's Steele a Port Maura and Remington investigate a \$1 million embezzlement. (CC)
44 BET	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)	106 & Park Holiday Hook-Up A free play Santa. (N)
46 COURT	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)	NYPD Blue "Lucky London" A young woman believes her twin sister to be the victim of a fatal shooting. (CC)
48 STR-UD	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show (CC)
50 LIFE	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.	The Golden Girls Blanche's daughter wants a baby.
51 ABC/AF	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)	7th Heaven "Baggage" Eric arranges for Peter and his dog to visit a Christmas center. (CC)
53 HIST	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)	The Weapons That Made Britain "Ad- miral" Knights in armor. (CC)
57 STR-IV	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)	(5:30) "Our Lips Are Sealed" (2000, Adventure) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen, Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen. (CC)
58 ADV 1	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points	(5:30) Extreme Boiling Points
59 MTV	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points	Boiling Points
60 NICK	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"	Juice "Plugs/Sponge- Bob SquarePants"

JAPAN TV

Morning
6:45 Between the Lions (3)
8:00 Disney (12)
Afternoon
1:20 Overseas Drama: Kajika no (3)
3:30 Gaijin Big Four (Rugby) Woods,
Annikka Sorenstam, etc. (12)
Evening
6:00 Grand Sumo 2004 Highlights (1)
6:30 News (6)
7:00 NHK News (1)
7:30 Overseas Sports Highlights (3V)
12:45 Japan Senior High School Sports (4)
12:50 Classical Music: NHK Symphony Orchest-
ra - Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in D
Minor (Choral) conductor: Krzysztof
Zurek, U.S. Movie (2001); See Spot Run / U.S.
Movie (1998); Paulie (4)

JAPAN TV-B57

Morning
6:45 Athens Olympics Best Selections: Wes-
tley Deringer (3)
7:10 Athens Olympics Best Selections: Bas-
tard (3)
8:10 Athens Olympics Best Selections: Track
and Field
8:10 Athens Olympics Best Selections: Rhythmic
Gymnastics
10:10 Athens Olympics Best Selections: Men's
Marathon
11:00 News
Afternoon
4:40 Keirin Grand Prix 2004
Evening
6:05 BS Documentary: Best Selections: Sul-
icide Bombing
7:10 BS Documentary: Best Selections: Chil-
dren in Iraq

8:10 BS Documentary: Best Selections: The
Wall in Palestine
10:10 BS Documentary: Israel Prison Abuse
11:50 CNN
12:10 NFL: San Diego Chargers vs. Indianapo-
lis Colts
4:10 BS Documentary: Powerplay in Europe
5:10 BS Documentary: Powerful Tornado

JAPAN TV-B511

Afternoon
6:00 U.S. Movie (2000): Ghetto (1:30)
Evening
7:00 NHK News
11:30 U.S. Movie (1970): The Outlaw Jesse
James (2:20)

WOWOW

Morning
6:00 Wake up
7:00 Sports
8:00 Top Choice

6:00 U.S. Movie (2002): The Hours (1:57)
11:40 U.S. Movie (2002): Sweet Home Ala-
bama (1:58)
Afternoon
1:30 U.S. Movie (2002): Trapped (1:58)
3:30 UEFA Euro 2004 Soccer: Semifinal:
Greece vs. Czech
Evening
6:00 U.S. Movie (2003): Terminator 3: Rise of
the Machines (1:52)
8:00 U.S. Movie (2002): Beyond Borders (2:30)
10:10 U.S. Series: Sex and the City
10:30 U.S. Series: Sex and the City
10:50 U.S. Series: Sex and the City
11:10 U.S. Series: Sex and the City

MTV

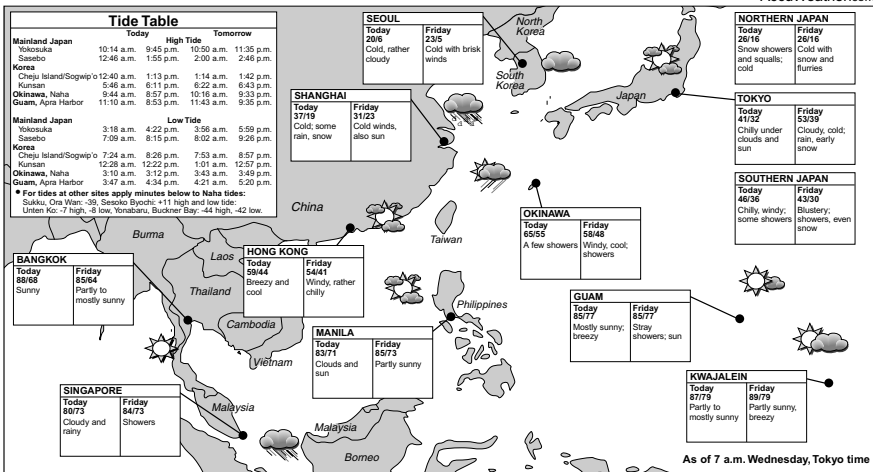
Morning
6:00 Wake up
7:00 Sports
8:00 Top Choice

10:00 Pure Music
11:40 World Selection
12:00 All the Best of MTV 2004 No. 17-18. 18
Afternoon
11:00 All the Best of MTV 2004 - Ashley Simp-
son No. 7-10.
1:30 All the Best of MTV 2004 - Pimp My Ri-
de No. 7-10.
2:50 All the Best of MTV 2004 Punk'd -
No. 7-10.
3:00 Sports Music Awards 2004
Evening
6:00 M. Size Thursday
7:00 M. Size Thursday
8:00 Pimp My Ride
9:00 M. Size Thursday
10:00 Pimp My Ride
10:30 M. Size Thursday
11:00 Screen
11:30 M. Size Thursday
12:00 U.S. Top 20 with Super D
2:00 M. Size Thursday
3:00 Screen
3:30 After Hours

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The Pacific Forecast



Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Saturday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 58, low 50.
 high 42, low 29.
 Sunday: Mostly sunny, high 41, low 34.

KADENA

Saturday: Mostly cloudy, high 58, low 50.
 Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 62, low 55.

SEOUL

Saturday: Mostly sunny, high 22, low 14.
 Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 35, low 21.

MANILA

Saturday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 85, low 73.
 Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 85, low 73.

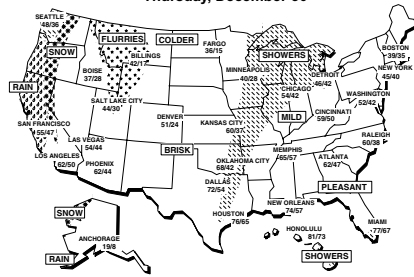
HAGATNA

Saturday: Partly sunny, high 87, low 75.
 Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 85, low 77.

Tuesday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	54/38	Los Angeles	61/51
Amarillo	67/37	Little Rock	56/40
Anchorage	25/8	Louisville	49/36
Asheville	48/25	Miami	73/62
Baltimore	34/28	Milwaukee	38/29
Birmingham	58/37	Nashville	56/37
Bismarck	36/13	New York	31/27
Boise	43/34	Omaha	52/29
Boston	30/27	Orlando	69/52
Brownsville	79/56	Philadelphia	33/28
Buffalo	33/26	Phoenix	68/54
Burlington	28/21	Pittsburgh	39/32
Charleston, SC	53/33	Portland, OR	50/38
Charlotte	49/28	Portland, ME	27/20
Cleveland	38/33	Salt Lake City	49/38
Columbus, OH	41/32	St. Louis	55/43
Duluth	28/13	San Antonio	68/51
El Paso	65/44	San Diego	64/56
Hartford	29/21	San Juan	85/72
Helena	32/14	Tampa	71/52
Indianapolis	40/33	Tulsa	63/46
Jacksonville	62/41	Washington	37/29
Kansas City	56/40	Wichita	61/37

Thursday, December 30



U.S. Extended Forecast

Pacific moisture will continue to plague California Thursday. Rain will fall in much of northern and central parts of the state, with snow in the higher elevations of the Cascades. Rain and mountain snow will affect the Pacific Northwest. Rain and snow showers will be found across the Rockies. Low pressure will bring some rain and drizzle to the Midwest and Great Lakes. Mild air will surge into the region ahead of the storm. The Southeast will be dry with some sun. On Friday, rain will continue to fall in parts of California. The Southwest may have some wet weather as well. In the East, scattered showers will be accompanied by mild air.

Thursday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	86/68	Sasebo NB	26/16
Beijing	25/7	Sapporo	20/6
Camp Casey	23/5	Seoul	37/19
Christchurch	74/49	Shanghai	80/73
Diego Garcia	85/76	Singapore	73/59
Hagatna	85/77	Sydney	33/16
Hanoi	60/41	Taegu	26/8
Hong Kong	59/44	Taipei	64/43
Honolulu	81/73	Tokyo	36/24

Thursday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	88/72	Budapest	33/25
Athens	51/42	Buenos Aires	88/64
Auckland	69/57	Cairo	78/58
Baghdad	67/49	Cancun	81/65
Barbados	87/70	Cape Town	69/50
Barcelona	48/41	Geneva	36/35
Berlin	37/37	Istanbul	48/35
Bermuda	65/58	Jerusalem	72/57
Brussels	48/40	Johnsburg	67/61



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 • Ads may not be for illegal activities.
 • Ads may not be for sexual services.
 • Ads may not be for illegal activities.
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Struggling Nuggets fire coach Bzdelik

Assistant Cooper to take over underachieving team on interim basis

By JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

DENVER — Jeff Bzdelik was fired Tuesday as coach of the Denver Nuggets, who are on a six-game losing streak and struggling despite the addition of Kenyon Martin this season.

Assistant Michael Cooper was appointed interim coach. "Right now, I really felt the team needed a change," Nuggets General Manager Kiki Vandeweghe said.

Sometimes it's nothing the head coach is doing wrong. It's just that a change of voice sometimes is the positive."

Bzdelik is the first NBA coach to be fired this season. Denver was expected to move near the top of the Western Conference after signing Martin, an All-Star power forward. So far, however, the Nuggets have been hurt by injuries and inconsistency.

The Nuggets started the season without power forward Nene and

have used 10 different starting lineups, with star forward Carmelo Anthony missing the past five games with a sprained ankle.

Shooting guard Yonhon Lenard, Denver's only legitimate outside shooting threat, was lost for the season with a torn Achilles' tendon in the opener.

Denver opened the season 2-5, won 10 of its next 12 games and has lost eight of its past nine, dropping to 13-15 after a 104-101 loss to Golden State on Monday night.

It wasn't just the losses — it was the way Denver was losing. Denver lost six games by at least 14 points and was lethargic in several others. The Nuggets have struggled defensively, particularly inside, and that has prevented them from utilizing their fast-break offense, one of the keys to their success last year.

The low point came in a nationally televised 19-point loss to Cleveland on Dec. 8.

Bzdelik said he wasn't sure which team was going to show up

from game to game and even questioned whether his team was in shape — suggesting the Nuggets may have been tuning him out.

"I didn't feel like the team was responding the way we had hoped," Vandeweghe said. "These things don't happen overnight, it's an evolution. I can't pinpoint when this trend started, but it started a while ago."

Bzdelik was a longtime assistant and scout under Pat Riley in Miami and New York before getting his first head coaching job with the Nuggets in 2002. Though Denver struggled to a league-worst 17-65 record in his first season, Bzdelik was credited with turning the Nuggets into a hardworking, defensive-minded team.

A roster overhaul and the addition of Anthony made all the difference last season. The Nuggets improved by 26 games to 43 wins to reach the playoffs for the first time in nine years.

Through all the success, Bzdelik wasn't able to get any security from the front office. Vandeweghe refused to give Bzdelik a contract extension last season and it seemed the only reason he was back this year was because of a contract clause that called for his option to be picked up if the Nuggets reached the playoffs.

It was a situation that may have had Bzdelik, 73-119 in just over two seasons with Denver, looking over his shoulder.

"Do I think I'm responsible? Yes, I do," he said. "responsibility." Vandeweghe said. "At the end of the day I take responsibility for all the things that go on here. There are my decisions and some of them are not fun decisions to make."

Cooper, a member of the Los Angeles Lakers' "Showtime" teams of the 1980s, coached the Los Angeles Sparks to two WNBA championships and a finals appearance in four years before join-



Jeff Bzdelik was 73-119 in just over two seasons as the coach of the Denver Nuggets.

ing the Nuggets as an assistant this season. "This is tough, but my goal now is to get us playing a little better," Cooper said.

"We'll concentrate on defense and just try to continue the winning ways this team ended last season and sort of started with at the beginning of the season."

Leg cramp, loss spoil Carter's Nets debut

The Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Vince Carter is glad he won't see the Palace of Auburn Hills again this season.

At least not until the playoffs. Carter scored 23 points in his debut with New Jersey but left in overtime with a cramp in his left hamstring, and the Nets fell to the Detroit Pistons 100-90 on Monday night.

"I'm OK — it just cramped up," Carter said. "I'll be fine as soon as I get some fluids into me."

The game was his first since he strained an Achilles' tendon in Toronto's 90-86 overtime loss to the Pistons on Dec. 8. He was traded to the Nets on Dec. 17.

"The game was his first since he strained an Achilles' tendon in Toronto's 90-86 overtime loss to the Pistons on Dec. 8. He was traded to the Nets on Dec. 17.

"I guess this is twice here, but I'm sure the cramps would have happened anywhere," he said. "I played a lot of minutes in my first game back, and I guess I got dehydrated. I felt good until then, and my Achilles' is fine."

He didn't start, but played 42 minutes and shot 8-for-19.

Vince is one of the top players in the league, and you can expect him to have a bright future in New Jersey." Nets coach Lawrence Frank said. "He was under a lot of pressure tonight, and he responded extremely well."

Richard Hamilton scored a season-best 37 points for Detroit, which overcame a late eight-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Of the last two games, the coaches have definitely given us a lot more freedom to do things on offense," Hamilton said.

Tayshaun Prince had 18 points and nine rebounds and matched a career high with seven assists.

Knicks 119, Magic 111: Stephon Marbury scored 34 points in

live performance of the season. Kurt Thomas, Houston and Jerome Williams added 15 points apiece for the Knicks, who set season highs in points (and assists) (29) and tied their season high for field goals made with 46.

Steve Francis scored 25 points and Cuttino Mobley added 24 for Orlando, playing for the first time after a four-day layoff.

Pacers 100, Hornets 82: At Indianapolis, Reggie Miller scored 24 points and Jermaine O'Neal added 16 to go with 11 rebounds for Indiana.

O'Neal was 7-for-15 in his second game after missing 15 for his role in a brawl with Detroit fans on Nov. 19.

Lee Nailon had a season-high 28 points for New Orleans, which has lost six straight and 17 of 18.

Wizards 106, Hornets 87: At Washington, Larry Hughes had 20 points and Gilbert Arenas 17 to lead the Wizards, who bounced back from trying a season low for points in a 109-74 loss to Minnesota on Sunday.

Emeka Okafor had 18 points and 11 rebounds for Charlotte, extending his streak of consecutive double-doubles to 16.

Grizzlies 96, Clippers 76: At Memphis, Tenn., Paul Gasol had 18 of his 24 points in the first half, and the Grizzlies rolled over slumping Los Angeles.

Bonzi Wells added 18 points for Memphis, which snapped a two-game losing streak. Corey Maggette scored 14 points for the Clippers, losing for the seventh time in eight games.



During his first game with the team, New Jersey Nets' Vince Carter is taken off the court because of an injured hamstring during overtime against the Detroit Pistons at the Palace in Auburn Hills, Mich. on Monday. The Pistons defeated the Nets 100-90.

SuperSonics 98, Jazz 88: At Salt Lake City, Richard Lewis scored 22 points and Ray Allen 19 as Seattle won in Utah for the first time in nine tries.

Matt Harpring scored 22 points for the Jazz, who lost for the fifth time in six games. Utah, last beaten at home by Seattle on Feb. 1, 2000, committed 23 turnovers.

76ers 111, Trail Blazers 104: At Portland, Ore., Allen Iverson overcame early shooting problems to score 28 points for Philadelphia.

The Blazers got a season-high 28 points from Darrius Miles and 25 from Zach Randolph. Andre Igoudala added a career-high 22 points for the 76ers.

Warriors 104, Nuggets 101: At Oakland, Calif., Michael Pitts scored a career-high 24 points and Golden State won three straight for the first time this season.

Rockets acquire Wesley, trade Jackson, Nachbar

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans Hornets traded shooting guard David Wesley to the Houston Rockets for 13-year veteran Jim Jackson and Boston Nachbar, team officials said Monday.

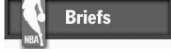
"Jim and Bostjan are going to fit well into our system and should be able to help us with their offensive skills," Hornets General Manager Allen Bristow said in a statement. "We're optimistic that the addition of these two players and the return of some of our injured players will give us a great boost on the court."

New Orleans is 2-24. Jackson, who plays shooting guard and small forward, holds career averages of 15.2 points, 4.9 rebounds and 3.4 assists. The 6-foot-6 journeyman has spent time with Dallas, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Golden State, Portland, Atlanta, Cleveland, Miami and Sacramento in addition to Houston, where he signed as a free agent before last season.

Nachbar was selected by the Rockets with the 15th overall pick in the 2002 NBA Draft. The 6-9 Slovenian forward averaged 2.8 points and 1.4 rebounds in his first two seasons with Houston and had averaged 3.1 points and 1.9 rebounds in 16 games with the Rockets this season.

The Hornets were in Indiana for a Monday night game with the Pacers, and Jackson and Nachbar were expected to go directly to New Orleans and join the Hornets for their next home game Wednesday night against Phoenix, team spokesman Harold Kaufman said.

Houston's next game is Tuesday night in Milwaukee.



Briefs

Wesley played for the Hornets since the opening of the 1997-98 season. "This is tough, but my goal now is to get us playing a little better," Cooper said.

Raptors place Mourning on injured list; activate Araujo
TORONTO — The Toronto Raptors placed newly acquired center Alonzo Mourning on the injured list Monday, making room for center Rafael Araujo on the active roster.

Mourning was acquired earlier this month from New Jersey in a trade involving Vince Carter. But Mourning has not reported to Toronto and may never play for the Raptors.

The NBA veteran wants to join a contender, and he is in Florida healing various injuries. The Raptors will likely buy out his contract.

The 34-year-old center, who underwent a kidney transplant in 2003, didn't have to pass a physical for the Dec. 17 trade to go through.

Van Horn on injured list
MILWAUKEE — Bucks forward Keith Van Horn was put on the injured list Tuesday because of an ailing right ankle.

He had missed the past 10 games with tendinitis in the ankle and will be out at least two more weeks, Bucks General Manager Larry Harris said.

Van Horn has averaged 17.2 points and 8.2 rebounds in 13 games this season. He is Milwaukee's third-leading scorer and top rebounder.

Yanks, Red Sox, Angels to pay luxury tax

Devil Rays have lowest payroll in third straight season

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Yankees are paying more in luxury tax than the Tampa Bay Devil Rays spent on their payroll.

New York is required to pay \$206,352, according to a Dec. 21 memorandum that was sent to all major league teams.

Two other teams also owe money for exceeding the payroll threshold of \$120.5 million: Boston must spend \$135,234 and Anaheim \$97,059. Checks for the competitive-balance tax, as it is formally known, are due at the commissioner's office by Jan. 31.

"The CBT is now a important part of baseball's economic landscape," Red Sox owner John Henry said in an e-mail Monday.

"From my perspective, even though it costs us, the stronger the CBT is in the future, the stronger the sport is going to be. It is a much more productive form of taxation than that of strictly revenue taxation because the economic incentives for teams are not damaged."

Tampa Bay, meanwhile, finished with the lowest payroll for the third straight season. At \$24.4 million, the Devil Rays had the lowest figure for a 25-man roster since 2000.

In 2003, the first year of the new luxury tax, the Yankees were the only team to pay, owing \$11,798,357, according to the team's latest revised bill. Because they exceeded the threshold a second time, the Yankees were taxed at a rate of 30 percent for the

2000-04 Baseball payroll comparison

NEW YORK (AP) — Comparisons of 2004 baseball payrolls, as determined by the commissioner's office. Totals include termination pay, prorated shares of signing bonuses and earned incentive bonuses, buyouts of 2004 options and cash transactions. Income deferred without interest is discounted.

Team	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
N.Y. Yankees	187,618,394	138,089,308	138,423,649	114,671,788	95,285,187
Boston	130,956,386	108,403,617	116,613,137	114,331,641	75,525,575
Anaheim	115,058,812	79,987,131	82,456,618	89,423,627	54,112,099
N.Y. Mets	103,199,211	112,828,559	102,863,303	95,125,240	82,246,383
Oakland	102,664,113	113,277,003	103,140,812	115,478,638	88,671,736
Chicago Cubs	100,653,389	84,048,880	79,499,669	72,866,411	59,480,018
Philadelphia	97,288,475	75,027,303	64,758,623	68,909,033	45,743,878
St. Louis	92,816,659	93,116,025	73,807,364	76,153,956	69,111,157
San Francisco	82,494,615	90,178,203	83,556,895	73,586,099	59,611,910
Houston	81,903,172	72,833,342	66,866,813	66,463,189	50,146,545
San Diego	79,238,597	91,133,644	98,366,465	93,647,695	69,811,517
Atlanta	79,446,468	97,948,436	84,705,177	84,879,987	57,575,059
Texas	72,122,305	103,303,814	89,689,021	86,917,555	67,674,004
Colorado	69,486,511	68,672,618	52,021,406	68,643,499	53,986,567
Arizona	68,412,599	63,735,715	109,503,307	85,124,407	72,484,341
San Diego	65,753,545	50,874,061	45,121,119	86,621,011	54,252,954
Chicago White Sox	64,615,141	63,285,340	57,252,021	62,858,544	56,777,812
Oakland	63,753,545	50,874,061	45,121,119	86,621,011	54,252,954
Detroit	58,812,762	55,388,056	56,574,721	51,101,488	44,806,893
Baltimore	58,111,469	72,657,390	53,984,719	71,507,777	68,398,574
Minnesota	54,795,587	56,985,573	41,825,387	27,411,912	16,723,347
Toronto	53,651,626	58,675,824	62,776,676	42,744,404	54,518,816
Florida	50,340,382	55,872,106	43,660,256	38,065,639	22,311,182
Cincinnati	46,244,012	56,005,545	44,501,074	43,846,492	42,317,480
Kansas City	44,728,466	45,426,756	52,217,132	36,127,441	25,916,297
Los Angeles	44,422,627	52,479,576	46,201,017	36,201,017	28,388,067
Montreal	39,396,467	47,261,440	36,076,732	34,034,862	27,721,468
Pittsburgh	33,487,271	51,272,285	42,182,616	46,601,790	33,658,256
Sanburn	25,959,934	43,347,132	49,066,107	46,648,727	33,967,613
Tampa Bay	24,417,167	27,434,258	35,882,301	50,974,068	61,211,863

amount they were over. Boston and Anaheim were taxed at a 22.5 percent rate.

If the Yankees go over the 2005 threshold of \$128 million, which appears certain, they would be taxed at a 40 percent rate.

New York also estimates it will give up about \$60 million as part of baseball's revenue-sharing plan this season, meaning the Yankees will send the commissioner's office about \$85 million of their estimated \$315 million revenue in 2004. Boston's revenue-sharing payment is estimated at approximately \$42 million on revenue of at least \$22 million.

The Yankees easily finished ahead of other teams in the regu-

lar payrolls figures for the sixth straight season, winding up at a record \$187.9 million, \$18 million above the previous mark they set in 2003.

Boston, which overcame a 3-0 deficit against the Yankees in the AL championship series and won the World Series for the first time since 1918, was second at \$130.4 million.

Anaheim, defeated by the Red Sox in the first round of the playoffs, was third at \$115.6 million, followed by the New York Mets at \$103.2 million, Los Angeles (\$101.7 million), the Chicago Cubs (\$100.7 million) and Philadelphia (\$97.4 million).

St. Louis, swept by Boston in the NL playoffs, was eighth at \$92.8 million.

At the other end, Milwaukee was 29th at \$29.6 million, down from \$43.3 million, and Pittsburgh was 28th at \$32.5 million, down from \$53.3 million.

Texas fell from fifth at \$103.3 million to 13th at \$79.2 million, Atlanta went from sixth at \$98 million to 12th at \$79.4 million, Seattle dropped from seventh at \$97.7 million to 11th at \$81.8 million and Arizona declined from 11th at \$83.8 million to 15th at \$68.4 million.

Anaheim rose from 12th at \$80 million to third, the Cubs increased from 10th at \$84 million to sixth and Philadelphia went up from 15th at \$71.5 million to seventh.

Payrolls include salaries, prorated shares of signing bonuses, earned bonuses, buyouts of 2004 options and cash transactions.

For the luxury tax, which is based on 40-man rosters, the average annual values of contracts and includes benefits, the Yankees finished with a payroll of \$203.9 million, while Boston was at \$134.5 million and Anaheim at \$124.6 million.

Many midlevel teams appear to be spending money on free agents this offseason, possibly because of the shift in economics created by increased revenue sharing. That could push the average salary higher next season.

According to the players' association, the average dropped 25 percent this year to \$2,313,535 from \$2,372,189, the first decrease since 1995 and only the third since record-keeping began in 1967.

Arizona, N.Y. still pursuing Johnson deal

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Yankees and Arizona Diamondbacks traded Monday night for the first time since the collapse last week of a three-team, 10-player trade that would have sent Randy Johnson to New York.

Yankees President Randy Levine spoke with incoming Arizona chief executive officer Jeff Moorad. No progress was made, and the sides planned to talk again later in the week.

The proposed trade came apart last week when Los Angeles reversed course and withdrew.

Ex-Blue Jay Ault's death was a suicide, officials rule

CLEARWATER, Fla. — The death of former Toronto Blue Jays first baseman Doug Ault was ruled a suicide, the medical examiner said Tuesday.

Ault died Dec. 22 at 54 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head at his Tarpon Springs home.

Tarpon Springs police had suspected Ault's death was a suicide, said Jeff Young said. The police declined to elaborate, citing the pending investigation.

Ault became part of Blue Jays lore when he hit two home runs in the first game of the expansion team's history. With a snow storm in Toronto and a cold wind blowing off Lake Ontario, he homered twice off Ken Brett in the Blue Jays' 9-4 victory over the Chicago White Sox at Exhibition Stadium on April 7, 1977.

Ault hit only 17 homers during his four years in the majors.

Sorenstam again voted Associated Press' female athlete of year

The Associated Press

Golfer Annika Sorenstam is the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year for the second third straight year. Sorenstam received 40 first-place votes and 263 points.

Diana Taurasi, who led Connecticut to the NCAA women's basketball title and then captured the WNBA Rookie of the Year award, finished second. She had 15 first-place votes and 154 points, two more than Russian tennis sensation Maria Sharapova.

Sorenstam's year began with a win in the ANZ Ladies Masters on Australia's Gold Coast, making up a four-stroke deficit at the midway point by closing with a pair of scintillating 65s. She ended the year by edging Cristie Kerr in a playoff in the ADT Championship, the final tournament on the LPGA calendar, with her only victory that didn't come by multiple shots.

United States defeats Switzerland in World Junior Hockey preliminary

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — The United States matched Switzerland's four-goal victory in the third period for a 6-4 victory Monday night in the preliminary round of the World Junior Hockey Championships.

The United States led 2-0 entering the third after goals by Ryan Callahan and Kevin Porter, but Switzerland tied it with two quick scores.

Sports briefs

Drew Stafford's goal put the United States back in the lead, and Tim Hensick, Robbie Schremp and Patrick O'Sullivan added scores to secure the win.

The United States, the tournament's defending champion, improved to 2-0. Switzerland fell to 1-1.

Sidney Crosby had two goals and Ryan Getzlaf a goal and two assists in Canada's 8-1 victory over Sweden in another preliminary game.

Sweden's Christopher Heino-Lindberg scored 15 of 16 shots in the first period, but Canada scored four goals in less than 15 minutes of the second.

Canada, a favorite to win the tournament, improved to 2-0 in preliminary games. Sweden dropped to 1-1.

Schild wins women's giant slalom

SEMMERING, Austria — Mariette Schild won a World Cup giant slalom before her home fans Tuesday and Tanja Poutinen of Finland regained the lead in the overall standings by finishing second. Sarah Schleper of the United States was fourth.

Schild completed the two runs on the Hirschenkogel course in 2 minutes, 15.97 seconds, edging Poutinen by 0.11 seconds. Another Austrian, Elisabeth Goergl, was third in 2:17.53.



U.S. forward Patrick O'Sullivan celebrates his goal with teammate Ryan Callahan during the third period of their preliminary-round game against Switzerland in the World Junior Hockey Championships at Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, N.D., on Monday. Team USA, the defending tournament champion, beat Switzerland 6-4 to improve to 2-0.

Postseason game is a big feat for Buffs

BY JOHN MARSHALL
The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — For a team that sets its sights on Big 12 and national championships, finishing just above .500 and earning a trip to midlevel bowl shouldn't be something to get excited about.

But consider what the Buffaloes have been through this year — sex and recruiting scandals, coach Gary Barnett's suspension, a wild ride through the schedule — and it's easy to understand their satisfaction from a 7-5 season and a spot in the Houston Bowl against Texas-Est Paso on Wednesday.

"It has been a rough year for this team and for this program," offensive lineman Sam Wilder said. "Things did not always go the way we wanted them to this year, but this team has kept fighting."

The long offseason threatened to overshadow anything the team might accomplish on the field.

A grand jury investigated claims by nine women who said they were sexually assaulted by players or recruits since 1997. No charges were filed, but three of those women sued the university and two of the suits are still pending.

A separate investigation concluded sex, alcohol and drugs were used as football recruiting tools by player-coaches, though there was no evidence university officials knowingly sanctioned the activity.

Barnett was suspended for three months after making insensitive remarks about two of the women, including former kicker Katie Hnida shortly after she said she was raped by a teammate in 2000.

The school overhauled its recruiting procedures, but the headlines didn't stop once the season started.

Embattled athletic director Dick Tharp resigned in November and Chancellor Richard Byrny followed suit earlier this month, though both said it had nothing to do with the scandal. A fraud investigator hired by state prosecutors is also looking into the school's fund-raising practices, including two football camps run by Barnett.

Somewhat, the players were able to fight off the distractions and win games.

"Everybody has gone through a lot, and the smoke has cleared and we're still standing," Barnett said. "The university, athletic department and administration have been a very successful year — and the football team."



Colorado coach Gary Barnett has been suspended and his team has endured sex and recruiting scandals this year. But the Buffaloes (7-5), who play UTEP in the Houston Bowl on Wednesday, will finish 2004 with a winning record.

It's hard to argue.

Colorado started off the season superbly, winning three straight games for the first time since 1998. That was followed by four losses in five games, seemingly ending Colorado's chances of earning a bowl bid.

But the Buffaloes won three straight games to end the regular season, beating rival Nebraska 26-20 on the road to earn a spot in the Big 12 championship game.

Winning the Big 12 North might have said more about the weakness of the division than Colorado's skill — the Buffaloes were crushed 42-3 by Oklahoma in the title game — but it was quite an accomplishment for a team not given much of a chance to succeed.

"I've never had a young team that has achieved as much as this team has," Barnett said. "If these kids can take this kind of approach when they're older, then they've really got a lot ahead of them."

As for Barnett, his year had nearly as many ups and downs as his team.

Barnett survived his suspension with his job intact after a university investigation, but the pressure didn't let up.

After being praised for holding his team together early in the season, Barnett heard the calls for his job during the midseason slide. It didn't help when Tharp, one of Barnett's biggest supporters, stepped down.

But just when things seemed the worst, Barnett turned his team around and got them into the Big 12 title game and a bowl, earning conference coach of the year honors.

"I really haven't thought about me very much," Barnett said. "In the throes of the battle, you don't start feeling sorry for yourself. You worry about the people you're responsible for and getting them out of the mess they're in."

Gators, Canes renew rivalry in Peach Bowl

BY MARK LONG
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dwayne Dixon knows as much as anyone about the Florida-Miami series.

He played for the Gators from 1980-83, splitting four games against the Hurricanes. He was a student assistant for two years following his college career, then returned to become the receivers coach in 1990 and has been there since then.

Now that the once-bitter rivalry has been renewed — the Hurricanes will play the Gators for the fourth time in five seasons Friday night in the Peach Bowl — Dixon believes the in-state rivals should try to meet more often.

It could happen.

"It really was one of the great rivalries in college football," he said. "And it has a chance to return to that if we get Miami on the schedule. I know that's tough to do, but it would be good for everyone — the fans, the players, the coaches."

Florida athletic director Jeremy Foley and Miami athletic director Paul Dee are awaiting the outcome of proposed legislation that would allow a 12-game schedule each season. If it passes — arguments are expected to be heard in April — the Gators and Hurricanes will play a home-and-home series every few years.

They won't play annually because both programs would like to use the extra game to play other elite teams. But they won't resume a heated series that lost some of its luster during the 13-year break.

The Peach Bowl could help, too.

"It means the world to us right now," Miami guard Chris Myers said. "This is our national championship game."

The Florida-Miami series began in 1938 and grew into a rivalry in the early 1950s, when the teams began playing for a wooden canoe. The 9-foot canoe made from a 200-year-old cypress log would be ceremoniously brought out at halftime, displayed on the sideline and then presented to the winning coach. Because Miami won the final game of a series that was played every year from 1944-1987, the canoe sits in the

school's sports hall of fame. It has been somewhat forgotten.

But memories of the series might never be erased.

There was the infamous "Florida Flop" in 1971 — when Florida defenders laid down and let the Hurricanes score, allowing the Gators to get the ball back and quarterback John Reeves to break Jim Plunkett's record for NCAA career passing yards.

Miami coach Frank Curci refused to shake hands with Florida coach Doug Dickey after the game. Making matters worse, several Gators headed to the East end zone of the Orange Bowl and jumped into a pool that housed Miami Dolphins mascot Flipper during NFL games.

It fired up the Hurricanes for years. The rivalry grew even more intense in 1980, when Florida fans — angry that the Gators trailed Miami 28-7 late in Gainesville — threw peaches at the Hurricanes, who were headed to the Peach Bowl.

Miami coach Howard Schnellenberger was so furious he ordered a field goal to add to the final margin.

For the Gators, the game never hit the heights of other Southeastern Conference rivalries such as Auburn, Georgia and Tennessee — or reached the crescendo of the annual meeting with Florida State.

So Florida dropped the Hurricanes in 1988 because it wanted to play a "more national schedule," then promptly replaced them with Montana State. Miami fans accused the Gators of pulling out because the Hurricanes were dominating them — on field and on the national scene.

With Florida's recruiting efforts suffering in talent-rich Dade County, former coach Steve Spurrier wanted the Hurricanes back on the schedule in 1990. But with the SEC expanding, there was no room.

After 13 years, Florida and Miami renewed the rivalry in the 2001 Sugar Bowl. Just a few nights before Miami's 37-20 win, a handful of players from both teams — most notably Miami's Bryant McKinnie and Florida's Alex Brown — mixed it up on Bourbon Street.

The series took another turn last season, when Brock Berlin rallied the Hurricanes from a 23-point, third-quarter deficit to a 38-33 victory.

NFL Hall of Fame Challenge

Top Scores for Week 16

256	yahtzee
252	768-SAF-T
250	davidalshire
248	derek40
248	BigRedOneAMLO
248	chrisba269
246	PilgrimPride
244	barkonthebus
242	BIG DRE
242	Razorbacks

Misawa AB, Japan
Camp Henry
Wiesbaden
1st Infantry Division
Leighton Barracks
HMC 121 Signal
Yokosuka
unit 20239
DYKORP
86 mg/qg

2812
2828
2810
2796
2782
2774
2772
2772
2776
2766

Jack58
Joe Corleone
giants1
Who Cares
STEELFROGWOOD
Bone-Daddy
Jaguar One
SPIELMEISTER 04
cowboy48
PilgrimPride

422 ABS RAF Croughton
Misawa
hbc 2/37 ar
MNF-1 DCSOPER
MAQ-12
HQ USAREUR, G2
DoD05
Hohenfels
Rhein Main AB
Yokosuka

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Check this space every Thursday during the entire NFL season for the weeks Top Scores and Best Overall Scores during the NFL Challenge.

SPORTS



Shaq scores 31 to help Heat win franchise-record 12th consecutive game, Page 33

Rams remain in playoff chase

As Philly rest stars, Jackson's career game lifts St. Louis

BY BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Rams still have high playoff hopes. The Philadelphia Eagles just hope the playoffs get here before anyone else goes down.

By beating the Eagles' junior varsity 20-7 Monday night, the Rams (7-8) ensured their season finale against the New York Jets wouldn't just be meaningful for the opponent. Behind

rookie Steven Jackson's best performance of his brief pro career, St. Louis stayed alive for the NFC West crown or for a wild-card berth.

"It was a statement game for me," Jackson said

after rushing for 148 yards and a 5-yard touchdown before bruising his right knee in the fourth quarter. "It was a must-win game. I wanted to come out and run the ball pretty hard when I had the opportunities. I wanted to make up for last time."

Jackson, a first-round draft choice and the first running back selected last April, missed the past two losses that dropped the Rams to the edge of elimination. A previous knee injury sidelined him two weeks ago, then coach Mike Martz didn't use him last week.



Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, above, played one series and led Philadelphia to its only touchdown on Monday. Running back Brian Westbrook, offensive tackle Tra Thomas and defensive end Jason Kearsle did not play for Philadelphia.



Philadelphia defender Roderick Hood tries to stop St. Louis wide receiver Isaac Bruce during the Rams' 20-7 victory on Monday night.

But Martz turned to the youngster immediately against Philadelphia (13-2), and it paid off.

In a stark departure from his passing persona, Martz — perhaps sensing it would be Jackson's night — called 10 running plays on the opening drive that covered 73 yards. Jackson ran for 46 yards and Marshall Faulk for 27 on the march.

Jackson also had a 43-yard run in the second period on a drive that ended with Jeff Wilkins missing a 44-yard field goal.

"That first series, we were handing the ball to him and he's running through them, around them, every which way you can," Martz said. "He's a terrific back and it afforded us the ability to go down and not throw the ball one time. When you've got a guy playing like that — spectacular."

If the Rams (7-8) beat the Jets on Sunday and Seattle loses to Atlanta, St. Louis will win the NFC West. If the Seahawks win and take the division, St. Louis can

make the playoffs by winning and having Minnesota lose at Washington, or by Carolina and New Orleans tying.

A win for the Jets would put them into the AFC playoffs.

"After all the drama we've been through this year, to be in position to potentially get into the playoffs, how awesome is that?" Martz said. "We will show up next week and lay it all out there."

The Eagles, who own home-field advantage for the NFC playoffs, didn't lay it out Monday night because they didn't need to. Perhaps spooked by the ankle and leg injury that has sidelined star receiver Terrell Owens, they weren't about to jeopardize other stars in a game that meant nothing to them.

Running back Brian Westbrook, their prime offensive threat with Owens out, was scratched, along with starting tackle Tra Thomas.

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Philadelphia's Greg Lewis, left, is tackled by the Rams' Jerametrius Butler. Without QB Donovan McNabb, the Eagles managed 92 yards of offense in 3 1/2 quarters.

Middling Nuggets, on a six-game slide, fire Bzdelik

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Connecticut routs Toledo in its bowl debut; Petrino talks with LSU

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